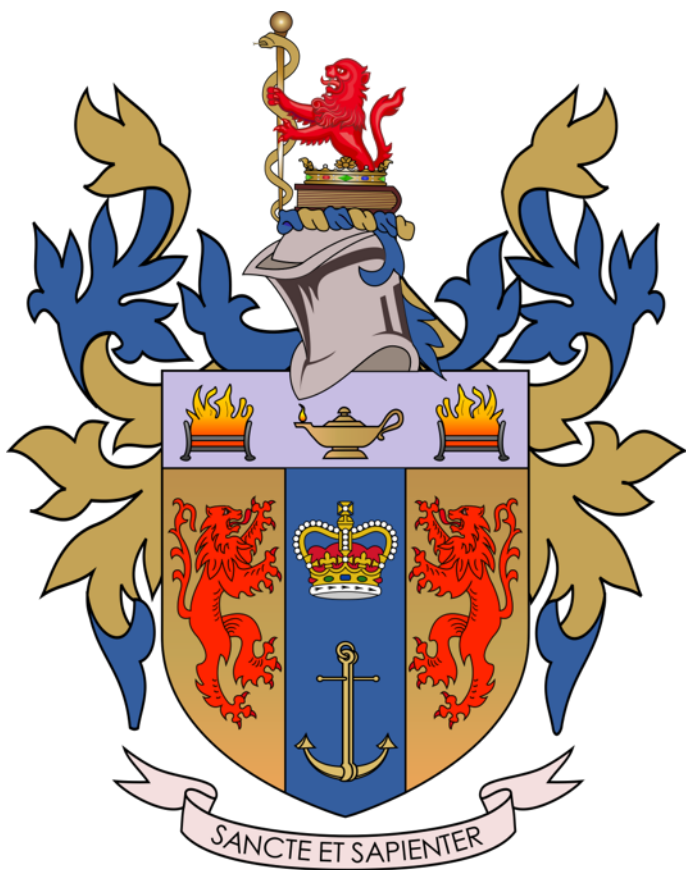




CAROL KERSTEN

# Islam in Indonesia

The Contest for Society,  
Ideas and Values



KING'S  
*College*  
LONDON

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# ISLAM IN INDONESIA



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*The Contest for Society, Ideas  
and Values*

OXFORD  
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## CONTENTS

|                                                                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                                                                | vii |
| <i>Note on Translation and Transliteration</i>                                         | ix  |
| <i>Abbreviations</i>                                                                   | xi  |
| <i>Glossary</i>                                                                        | xv  |
| Introduction: An Intellectual History of Contemporary Indonesian Islam                 | 1   |
| 1. Secularism, Pluralism and Liberalism in Indonesian Muslim Contexts                  | 15  |
| 2. Islam in Indonesia Today: Discourses and Interlocutors                              | 41  |
| 3. The Weight of the Predecessors: Adaptation, Critique and Transformation             | 83  |
| 4. Debating Secularism: Islam, Statehood and Democracy                                 | 137 |
| 5. The Letter or the Spirit of Islamic Law? Legal Formalists versus Substantivists     | 179 |
| 6. Contentious Triangulation: Religious Pluralism, Human Rights and Freedom of Thought | 221 |
| Conclusion: Secularity and Toleration, Liberty and Freethinking                        | 279 |
| <i>Notes</i>                                                                           | 289 |
| <i>Bibliography</i>                                                                    | 329 |
| <i>Index</i>                                                                           | 351 |





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Carool Kersten

London, Fall 2013

## NOTE ON TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

A book on Islam will unavoidably have to deal with terminology, jargon and expressions in non-Western languages; in this instance, Arabic and Indonesian. Unless published English translations were available, the translations from the Indonesian and Arabic are mine. In transliterating Arabic terms, I have adopted a simplified system based on the conventions of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES), but dispensing with diacritics for long vowels and consonants with no (near) equivalents in European languages. Those with the appropriate linguistic and philological qualifications will be able to establish the original Arabic anyway, while other readers need not be burdened with a possibly distracting idiosyncratic typography.

Spelling of Indonesian adheres to the changes introduced in 1972, with the exception of personal names where I respect the choice of the bearer. Also for the names of the two first presidents I have decided on Sukarno and Suharto, instead of Soekarno and Soeharto, because this has become common in contemporary publications. One remaining complication is the fact that Indonesian has its own system of transliterating Arabic terms. Here it is only applied when using materials written in Indonesian.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

|               |                                                                                                                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AKKBB         | <i>Aliansi Kebangsaan untuk Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan</i> (National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief) |
| <i>Aswaja</i> | <i>Ahl al-sunnah wa' al-jama'ah</i> (Adherents to the Traditions of the Prophet and the Community)                             |
| BKPMI         | <i>Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Masjid Indonesia</i> (Communication Forum of the Indonesian Mosque Youth)                           |
| BKPRMI        | <i>Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Remaja Masjid Indonesia</i> (Muslim Youth Organization)                                             |
| CLD-KHI       | Counter Legal Draft <i>Kompilasi Hukum Islam</i>                                                                               |
| CPDS          | Center for Policy and Development Studies                                                                                      |
| DDII          | <i>Dewan Dakwah Islamiya Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council)                                                |
| FKASWJ        | <i>Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunna Wa Jamaah</i>                                                                                  |
| FORMACI       | <i>Forum Mahasiswa Ciputat</i> (Forum of Ciputat Students)                                                                     |
| FPI           | <i>Front Pembela Islam</i> (Islamic Defenders Front)                                                                           |
| GAM           | <i>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</i> (Free Aceh Movement)                                                                               |
| Gerindra      | <i>Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya</i> (Greater Indonesia Movement Party)                                                        |
| Golkar        | <i>Golongan Rakyat</i> (Functional Groups)                                                                                     |
| HMI           | <i>Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam</i> (Association of Muslim Students)                                                               |
| HTI           | <i>Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia</i>                                                                                                 |
| HUDA          | <i>Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh</i> (Aceh Ulama Council)                                                                          |
| IAIN          | <i>Institut Agama Islam Negeri</i> (State Institute for Islamic Studies)                                                       |

## ABBREVIATIONS

|            |                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ICMI       | <i>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia</i> (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals)                                                  |
| IMM        | <i>Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah</i> (Association of Muhammadiyah Students)                                                                     |
| IPB        | <i>Institut Pertanian Bogor</i> (Bogor Agricultural University)                                                                                 |
| ITB        | <i>Institut Teknologi Bandung</i> (Bandung Institute of Technology)                                                                             |
| JI         | <i>Jemaah Islamiyah</i>                                                                                                                         |
| JIL        | <i>Jaringan Islam Liberal</i> (Liberal Islam Network)                                                                                           |
| JIMM       | <i>Jaringan Intelektual Muhammadiyah Muda</i> (Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals)                                                     |
| KAMMI      | <i>Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia</i> (United Front of Indonesian Muslim University Students)                                         |
| KHI        | <i>Kompilasi Hukum Islam</i> (Islamic Law Compilation)                                                                                          |
| KISDI      | <i>Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam</i> (Indonesia Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World)                        |
| KMP        | <i>Koalisi Merah-Putih</i> (Red-White Coalition led by Gerindra and Golkar parties)                                                             |
| Komnas HAM | <i>Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia</i> (National Committee on Human Rights)                                                                   |
| LAKPESDAM  | <i>Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia</i> (Institute for the Research and Development of Human Resources)                      |
| LIPI       | <i>Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Institute of Sciences)                                                                    |
| LIPIA      | <i>Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab</i> (Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences)                                                      |
| LKiS       | <i>Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial</i> (Institute for Islamic and Social Studies)                                                               |
| LKPSM      | <i>Lembaga Kajian Pesantren dan Sumber Daya Manusia</i> (Institute for Educational and Human Resources Research)                                |
| LMD        | <i>Latihan Mujahid Dakwah</i> (Preacher Combatants)                                                                                             |
| LP3ES      | <i>Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial</i> (Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information) |
| LPPI       | <i>Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam</i> (Institute for the Research and Teaching of Islam)                                               |

## ABBREVIATIONS

|         |                                                                                                                               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LSAF    | <i>Lembaga Studi Agama dan Falsafat</i> (Institute for the Study of Religion and Philosophy)                                  |
| LSIP    | <i>Lembaga Studi Islam Progresif</i> (Institute for the Study of Progressive Islam)                                           |
| LSM     | <i>Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat</i> (Self-reliant Community Institutions, NGOs)                                                 |
| MMI     | <i>Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Council or Muslim Religious Warriors)                                          |
| MPR     | <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People's Consultative Assembly)                                                        |
| MPU     | <i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama</i> (Consultative Council of Religious Scholars)                                             |
| MTPPI   | <i>Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam</i> (Council for Religious Rulings and the Furtherance of Islamic Thought) |
| MUI     | <i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> (Council of Indonesian Islamic Scholars)                                                       |
| NKK     | <i>Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus</i> (Normalization of Campus Life)                                                            |
| NAD     | <i>Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam</i> (Privileged Province of Aceh)                                                                 |
| NU      | <i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim mass organization)                                          |
| P3M     | <i>Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat</i> (Society for Educational and Community Development)                  |
| PAN     | <i>Partai Amanat Nasional</i> (National Mandate Party)                                                                        |
| PBB     | <i>Partai Bulan Bintang</i> (Crescent Star Party)                                                                             |
| PBNU    | <i>Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Central Board of the Nahdlatul Ulama)                                                  |
| PD      | <i>Partai Demokrat</i> (Democrat Party)                                                                                       |
| PDI(-P) | <i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia(-Perjuangan)</i> (Indonesian Democracy Party—Struggle)                                          |
| PERSIS  | <i>Persatuan Islam</i>                                                                                                        |
| PKB     | <i>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa</i> (National Awakening Party)                                                                   |
| PK(S)   | <i>Partai Keadilan Sejahtera</i> (Justice and Prosperity Party)                                                               |
| PMII    | <i>Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia</i> (Movement of Indonesian Muslim Students)                                          |

## ABBREVIATIONS

|                |                                                                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PPM            | <i>Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah</i> (Central Board of the Muhammadiyah)                |
| PPP            | <i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> (United Development Party)                        |
| PSIK           | <i>Pusat Studi Islam dan Kenegaraan</i> (Center for Islam and State Studies)          |
| STF Driyarkara | <i>Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara</i> (Driyarkara Advanced School for Philosophy) |
| STW            | <i>Sekolah Tinggi Wiraswasta</i> (Higher School for Entrepreneurship)                 |
| TPI-Muh        | <i>Tadarus Pemikiran Islam Muhammadiyah</i> (Study of Muhammadiyah Islamic Thinking)  |
| UGM            | <i>Universitas Gadjah Mada</i>                                                        |
| UI             | <i>Universitas Indonesia</i>                                                          |
| UIN            | <i>Universitas Islam Negeri</i> (State Islamic University)                            |



## GLOSSARY

|                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Abangan</i> (In.)                               | ‘Nominal’ Muslims, whose religious beliefs and practices incorporate elements of customary law ( <i>adat</i> ) and elements of other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, indigenous spirituality) |
| <i>Adat</i> (In./Ar.)                              | customary law                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Agama Hanif</i>                                 | Hanif (monotheist) religion                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Ahl al-Dhimma</i><br>(Ar., In.: <i>Dzimma</i> ) | non-Muslims given protected status in Muslim territory against payment of a special tax                                                                                                      |
| <i>ahl al-hall wa’l-‘aqd</i> (Ar.)                 | ‘people who can loosen and bind’; those holding legal authority                                                                                                                              |
| <i>ahl al-ikhtisas</i> (Ar.)                       | scholarly specialists                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Ahl al-Kitab</i> (Ar.)                          | ‘People of the Book’                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Ahlussunnah wal-Jama’ah</i><br>(In./Ar.)        | <i>Ahl al-sunnah wa’ al-jama’ah</i> (Adherents to the Traditions of the Prophet and the community)                                                                                           |
| <i>Akhlaq</i> (Ar.)                                | morals; ethics; virtues                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Aliran</i> (In.)                                | ideological bloc or ‘pillar’                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Aliranisasi</i> (In.)                           | ‘pillarization’ of society into ideological blocs                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Amal salih</i> (Ar.)                            | ‘good works’                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Anak Muda NU</i>                                | Young NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) cadres                                                                                                                                                            |
| ‘ <i>Aqida</i> (Ar.)                               | creed; basic tenets of the faith                                                                                                                                                             |
| ‘ <i>Aql</i> (Ar.)                                 | human reason; rational thinking                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Asas tunggal</i> (In.)                          | sole foundation (of the state)                                                                                                                                                               |

## GLOSSARY

|                                                     |                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Asl</i> (pl. <i>usul</i> , Ar.)                  | principle                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Baitul Mal Aceh</i> (In./Ar.)                    | Islamic Treasury of Aceh                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Batin</i> (Ar.)                                  | inward; esoteric                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Bayan</i> (Ar.)                                  | discursive proof                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> (In.)                   | Unity in Diversity                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Burhan</i> (Ar.)                                 | demonstrative proof                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Cendekiawan</i> (In./Sanskrit)                   | intellectual                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Dakwah</i> (In., Ar. <i>da‘wa</i> )              | literally ‘call’; Islamic religious propaga-<br>tion                                                                                        |
| <i>Dar al-harb</i> (Ar.)                            | ‘Abode of war’; areas not yet under con-<br>trol of the Islamic realm                                                                       |
| <i>Dar al-Islam</i> (Ar.)                           | ‘Abode of Islam’                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Dharuriyyat</i> (Ar.)                            | primary objectives of Islamic law-giving                                                                                                    |
| <i>Dhimmi</i> (Ar.)                                 | someone accorded <i>Dhimma</i> status                                                                                                       |
| <i>Dinas Syariat Islam</i> (In.)                    | Shari‘a Office                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Dwi-fungsi</i> (In.)                             | ‘double function’, referring to the dual<br>role of the Indonesian armed forces in<br>terms of national defense and economic<br>development |
| <i>Far‘</i> (pl. <i>furū‘</i> , Ar.)                | derivatives, as opposed to principles or<br><i>usul</i>                                                                                     |
| <i>Fatwa</i> (Ar.)                                  | (non-binding) legal opinion issued by a<br>jurisconsult or <i>mufti</i>                                                                     |
| <i>Fiqh</i> (Ar., In: <i>fiqih</i> ; <i>fikih</i> ) | Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic legal science                                                                                                |
| <i>Fitra</i> (Ar.)                                  | innate human disposition to religious<br>belief or faith                                                                                    |
| <i>Gerakan Pembaruan</i>                            | Movement for the Renewal of Islamic                                                                                                         |
| <i>Pemikiran Islam</i> (In.)                        | Thinking                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Ghazwul fikri</i> (In./Ar.)                      | ‘intellectual invasion’; also written as <i>al-</i><br><i>ghazwu al-fikry</i> ; <i>ghazw al-fikri</i>                                       |
| <i>Hadara</i> (Ar.)                                 | civilization                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Hajjiyat</i> (Ar.)                               | secondary objectives of Islamic law-giving                                                                                                  |
| <i>Halqa (halaqa)</i> (Ar.)                         | study circle                                                                                                                                |
| <i>(Al-)hanafiyya al-samha</i><br>(Ar.)             | broad religious inclusiveness                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hanif</i> (Ar.)                                  | Qur’anic term for monotheists who do<br>not belong to the Judaic, Christian or<br>Islamic faith tradition                                   |
| <i>Haqiqa</i> (Ar.)                                 | (ultimate) truth                                                                                                                            |

## GLOSSARY

|                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Hudud</i> (Ar.)                                                | punishments prescribed by Islamic law                                                                                                            |
| <i>Hukum Islam</i> (In.)                                          | Islamic law                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>‘Ibadat</i> (Ar.)                                              | acts of worship; subject area in Islamic jurisprudence dealing with rituals and practices including prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage   |
| <i>Ijma’</i> (Ar.)                                                | consensus of the scholars                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Ijtihad</i> (Ar.)                                              | independent reasoning, or the use of rational thinking; first introduced as a methodological tool in juridical or legal thinking                 |
| <i>‘Ilm</i> (pl. <i>‘ulum</i> , In.: <i>ilmu</i> )                | knowledge; science                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Iman</i> (Ar.)                                                 | faith                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Insan kamil</i> (Ar.)                                          | ‘perfect man’: ideal type of pious human being, modeled after the Prophet Muhammad                                                               |
| <i>‘Irfan</i> (Ar.)                                               | intuitive knowledge; illuminationism                                                                                                             |
| <i>Islah wa’l-tajdid</i> (Ar.)                                    | reform and renewal                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Jalan tengah</i> (In.)                                         | middle way                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Kalam</i> (Ar.)                                                | (discursive) Islamic theology                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Kalimatun Sawa’</i> (Ar.)                                      | Common Word; Qur’anic reference to the common origin of Judaism, Christianity and Islam                                                          |
| <i>Kebatinan</i> (In.)                                            | mysticism, spirituality (also referred to as <i>kejawen</i> and <i>kepercayaan</i> ); from the Arabic <i>batin</i> , meaning inward and esoteric |
| <i>Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa</i>                                    | ‘Supreme Being’; belief in this Supreme Being is the first principle of Pancasila                                                                |
| <i>Kejawen</i> (In.)                                              | ‘Javanism’, indigenous spiritual practices, cf. also <i>kebatinan</i> , <i>kepercayaan</i>                                                       |
| <i>Kepercayaan</i> (In.)                                          | indigenous spiritual beliefs                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Keterbukaan</i> (In.)                                          | ‘opening-up’, liberalization                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Khalifa Allah fi’l-ard</i><br>(Ar., In: <i>khalifatullah</i> ) | God’s viceregent on earth (humankind)                                                                                                            |
| <i>Khilafa Allah fi’l-ard</i>                                     | human viceregency on earth                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Ksatria piningit</i> (In.)                                     | ‘hidden knight’; mystical Javanese hero                                                                                                          |
| <i>(Al)-kulliyat al-khamsa</i> (Ar.)                              | the five basic rights protected under law: life, religion, intellect, property, lineage                                                          |
| <i>Kufr</i> (Ar.)                                                 | unbelief                                                                                                                                         |

## GLOSSARY

|                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kyai</i> (In.)                                                 | respected or authoritative religious teacher                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Laskar Jihad</i> (In.)                                         | reactionary Muslim militia                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Lepas-landas</i> (In.)                                         | 'taking off'; reference to acceleration phase in Indonesia's economic development plan under New Order                                                         |
| <i>Madhhab</i> (Ar., In.: <i>madzab</i> ; <i>mazhab</i> )         | 'school'; usually referring to one of the authoritative schools of Islamic jurisprudence ( <i>fiqh</i> )                                                       |
| <i>Mahkamah syariah</i> (In./Ar.)                                 | Shari'a Court                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Majelis Tarjih</i> (In./Ar.)                                   | Council for Religious Rulings                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Maklumat Keindonesiaan</i> (In.)                               | 'Declaration of Indonesianness'                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Manhaj</i> (Ar.)                                               | method (of scholarly, religious or philosophical thinking)                                                                                                     |
| <i>Maqasid al-shari'a</i> (Ar., In.: <i>Maqashid al-syariah</i> ) | 'objectives of shari'a'; Islamic philosophy of law and ethics                                                                                                  |
| <i>Marhaen/Marhaenis</i> (In.)                                    | proletariat/proletarian                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Maslaha</i> (Ar.)                                              | 'Common Good'; public interest                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Masyarakat madani</i> (In./Ar.)                                | civil society                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Masyumi</i> (In.)                                              | orig. <i>Masjumi</i> ( <i>Majelis Sjuro Muslimin Indonesia</i> ), Indonesia's main Islamic party after independence (1945–60)                                  |
| <i>Mazhab</i> (In.)                                               | Indonesian rendition of <i>madhhab</i>                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Milla Ibrahim</i> (Ar.)                                        | Community of Abraham; a reference to the Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam                                                                  |
| <i>Mu'amalat</i> (Ar.)                                            | 'interactions', subject area in Islamic jurisprudence dealing with non-religious issues such as marriage, inheritance, commercial and political administration |
| <i>Mu'tazila</i> (Ar.)                                            | school of religious thinking using Hellenic rationalism, emerging in the 9 <sup>th</sup> century during the Abbasid Caliphate                                  |
| <i>Muwatana</i> (Ar.)                                             | citizenship                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Nahdliyyin</i>                                                 | 'Reawakeners'; used to refer to adherents and activists in the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)                                                             |
| <i>Naql</i> (Ar.)                                                 | transmitted knowledge                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Orde Baru</i> (In.)                                            | 'New Order'; military regime led by                                                                                                                            |

## GLOSSARY

|                                      |                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | General Suharto that controlled Indonesia 1966–99                                                                        |
| <i>Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk</i> (In.) | ‘Organisations without Form’; oppositional forces considered subversive by the New Order regime                          |
| <i>Paman Sam</i> (In.)               | ‘Uncle Sam’                                                                                                              |
| <i>PAM Swakarsa</i> (In.)            | self-defense militias                                                                                                    |
| <i>Pancasila</i> (In.)               | ‘Five Principles’, the state doctrine first introduced by President Sukarno in 1945                                      |
| <i>Pembaruan</i> (In.)               | renewal, cf. also the <i>tajdid</i>                                                                                      |
| <i>Pengadilan Agama</i> (In.)        | religious court                                                                                                          |
| <i>Penghijauan</i> (In.)             | ‘Greening’, the Islamization of Indonesian society                                                                       |
| <i>Peradaban</i> (In.)               | civilization                                                                                                             |
| <i>Perda syariat</i> (In.)           | <i>Peraturan Daerah Syariat</i> (Regional Orders for compliance with Islamic law)                                        |
| <i>Pesantren</i> (In.)               | Islamic boarding school                                                                                                  |
| <i>Poros Tengah</i> (In.)            | ‘Central Axis’; alliance of moderate Muslim parties                                                                      |
| <i>Pribumisasi</i> (In.)             | indigenization                                                                                                           |
| <i>Qanun</i> (In./Ar.)               | bill, law, legal decree                                                                                                  |
| <i>Qat’i</i> (Ar.)                   | Islamic legal expression referring to categorical or definitive acts, as opposed to <i>zanni</i>                         |
| <i>Qiyas</i> (Ar.)                   | reasoning by analogy                                                                                                     |
| <i>Reformasi</i> (In.)               | Reformation; period after the regime change of 1998 which led to the fall of the New Order regime led by General Suharto |
| <i>Ridda</i> (Ar.)                   | apostasy                                                                                                                 |
| <i>(Al-)salaf al-salih</i> (Ar)      | pious ancestors                                                                                                          |
| <i>Santri</i> (In.)                  | pious, observant Muslim                                                                                                  |
| <i>Sipil</i> (In.)                   | civil                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Sipilis</i> (In.)                 | derogative acronym of ‘secularism, pluralism, liberal’, suggesting an association with the STD syphilis                  |
| <i>Sunnatullah</i> (In./Ar.)         | ‘divine order’                                                                                                           |
| <i>Tabligh</i> (Ar.)                 | ‘dissemination’, practising Islamic religious propagation                                                                |
| <i>Tafsir</i> (Ar.)                  | Qur’an commentary; exegesis                                                                                              |

## GLOSSARY

|                                                    |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Taghyir</i> (Ar.)                               | alteration to the authenticity of Islamic law                                                        |
| <i>Tahsiniyyat</i> (Ar.)                           | non-essential embellishments connected to Islamic law-giving                                         |
| <i>Tajdid</i> (Ar.)                                | lawful or permissible renewal of Islamic thinking                                                    |
| <i>Takhayul, bid'a, churafat</i> (Ar./In.)         | unlawful accretions, innovations and superstitions                                                   |
| <i>Talfiq</i> (Ar.)                                | Islamic reformist practice of choosing suitable elements from different authoritative schools of law |
| <i>Taqlid</i> (Ar.)                                | imitation                                                                                            |
| <i>Taqwa</i> (Ar.)                                 | God-consciousness                                                                                    |
| <i>Tarbiyah</i> (In./Ar.)                          | Islamic training                                                                                     |
| <i>Tarjih</i> (Ar.)                                | selecting the right legal position on the basis of the strongest possible evidence                   |
| <i>Tasamuh</i> (Ar.)                               | tolerance                                                                                            |
| <i>Tasawwuf</i> (Ar.)                              | Sufism; Islamic mysticism                                                                            |
| (Al) - <i>tawassut wa al-i'tidal</i> (Ar.)         | moderation and justice                                                                               |
| <i>Tawazun</i> (Ar.)                               | balance                                                                                              |
| <i>Tauhid</i> (Ar., In.: <i>tauhid</i> )           | unity and unicity of God                                                                             |
| <i>Tausiyah</i> (In./Ar.)                          | religious non-legal admonition                                                                       |
| <i>Turath</i> (Ar., In.: <i>turats</i> )           | heritage, civilizational legacy                                                                      |
| ' <i>Ulama</i> (Ar., In.: <i>ulema</i> )           | Islamic religious scholars                                                                           |
| ' <i>ulum al-din</i> (Ar., In.: <i>ulumuddin</i> ) | religious sciences; disciplines of traditional Islamic learning                                      |
| <i>Umma wasat</i> (Ar.)                            | middle community                                                                                     |
| <i>Umma wahida</i> (Ar.)                           | single community                                                                                     |
| <i>Usroh</i> (In., Ar.: <i>usra</i> )              | 'family'; cell-like structure of the <i>tarbiya</i> movement                                         |
| <i>Usul al-din</i> (Ar., In.: <i>ushuluddin</i> )  | foundations of religion                                                                              |
| <i>Usul al-fiqh</i> (Ar.)                          | foundations of jurisprudence                                                                         |
| <i>Wilayatul Hisbah</i> (In./Ar.)                  | religious police force (in Aceh)                                                                     |
| <i>Zahir</i> (Ar.)                                 | outward, manifest, exoteric                                                                          |
| <i>Zandaqa</i> (Ar.)                               | heresy                                                                                               |
| <i>Zanni</i> (Ar.)                                 | Islamic legal expression referring to non-categorical or changeable acts, as opposed to <i>qat'i</i> |

# INTRODUCTION

## AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN ISLAM

In July 2005, the Council of Indonesian Islamic Scholars (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) issued a fatwa, or religious opinion, in which they categorically condemned the notions of pluralism, liberalism and secularism as running counter to the teachings of Islam when it comes to doctrine and acts of worship (*'ibadat*).<sup>1</sup> In terms of human interactions (*mu'amalat*), the fatwa was more ambiguous: stating that whereas in a society with a plurality of religions the Muslim community may assume an inclusivist attitude, they should only interact with non-Muslims to the extent of not inflicting mutual harm.<sup>2</sup> Islamist movements across the Indonesian political spectrum, from the vigilantes of the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI) to the more intellectual *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI), regarded the fatwa as a vindication of their agendas for turning Indonesia into an Islamic state. Less than a year later, a number of prominent Muslim intellectuals defied MUI and its sympathizers by joining a broad coalition of pro-democracy activists. They affirmed their adherence to the principles of pluralism, liberalism and secularism by countering the fatwa with the so-called *Maklumat Keindonesiaan*, or 'Declaration of Indonesianness'.<sup>3</sup> Although inter-communal violence, which ravaged Indonesia in the years around the regime change of 1998, seemed to have died down, against the background of this growing antagonism among Indonesian Muslims themselves, 2005–6 must be considered another watershed year.

The polarization between different groups of Muslim activists is also echoed in the increasingly confrontational language that is employed in intellectual debates. Puritan and reactionary elements within Indonesia's main modernist Muslim organization, the *Muhammadiyah*, challenge their traditionalist Islamic counterparts of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) by declaring their practices as unlawful accretions, innovations and superstitions—or *takhayul*, *bid'ā* and *churafat*, in Islamic idiom. Amidst rising tensions these terms have been abbreviated into 'TBC' in order to insinuate that assertive progressive elements within the NU were infecting Indonesia's Muslim community with a dangerous disease.<sup>4</sup> Also the polemical Islamist Adian Husaini (b.1965) resorts to the rhetoric of pathogens: writing about 'the virus of liberalism' that has invaded Islamic university education and academic scholarship, or referring to secularism, pluralism and liberalism as '*sipilis*'.<sup>5</sup> Progressive Muslims retort by speaking of an 'ideological pandemic of religious Puritanism'.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, this growing antagonism is no longer confined to a war of words, but emerges through the persecution, dehumanization and outright murder of perceived 'deviants', such as Shi'ites and adherents of the Ahmadiyya movement.<sup>7</sup>

While freedom of religion and religious tolerance are evidently one of the key battlegrounds, there are much wider implications to these developments: What is the status of universal human rights in Indonesia? What does this tell us about the chances of success for Indonesia's ongoing democratization process? How optimistic (if it at all) can we be about its sustainability? And ultimately, what kind of country does Indonesia want to be?

On 22 May 1998, after more than thirty years in power, General Suharto (1923–2008) stepped down as President of Indonesia. This also spelled the end of his New Order regime (1965–99), as interim president B. J. Habibie (b.1936) was unable to hold on to power in the first free presidential elections held a year later. After decades of repression, the newly inaugurated *Reformasi* era threw Indonesia's public space wide open, creating prospects for political emancipation that were difficult to fathom. Unprecedented opportunities also emerged for civil society advocates, including Muslim activists of varying backgrounds and with diverging agendas. Having blocked attempts by Islamist politicians to include references to Islamic law in Indonesia's constitution of 1945 through an addendum known as the 'Jakarta Charter', in the early 1960s President Sukarno (1901–70, in office



## INTRODUCTION

1945–68) moved to outlaw and disband the country's main Islamic party, Masyumi.

For most of its rule, the New Order regime continued to exercise a strict control over political Islamic activism, only slightly loosening its grip during the course of the 1990s. When, by the spring of 1998, it became clear that Suharto's time was running out, it was the leading independent Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005) who played an instrumental role in convincing the ageing autocrat to step down.<sup>8</sup> This cleared the way for two other prominent Muslim leaders associated with the country's two main Islamic mass organizations to reach the pinnacles of state power. Abdurrahman Wahid (1940–2009), former head of the NU, became the first freely elected president of the Indonesian republic, while Muhammadiyah chairman Amien Rais (b.1944) was chosen as Speaker of the Consultative Assembly.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of a relatively peaceful transfer of power, over the next ten years Indonesia remained the scene of conflicting political experiences: on the one hand, the executive, legislative, judiciary and military institutional structures underwent significant changes; on the other hand, large-scale inter-communal and inter-religious violence raged through the Indonesian archipelago due to a breakdown in law and order, as the armed forces struggled to adjust to their new role after decades of unbridled political power. While a vast array of political parties have contested four subsequent freely conducted national elections, in each and every one of them votes for the Islamic parties continued to erode. And yet, the role of religion in public life still seems to be the foremost issue in the minds of many Indonesian Muslims.

Thus, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw an unprecedented sequence of events in a Muslim country that has consistently refused to identify itself as an Islamic state. Indonesia's future course also has global ramifications. Because of its geographical position and size, as well as its economic potential as the fourth most populous country in the world, Indonesia has the ambition to join the other superpowers-in-waiting: China, India, Russia and Brazil.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps even more important, as the world's largest Muslim nation-state, its experiences may be instructive for gauging the repercussions of the sea of change that has been affecting other parts of the Muslim world in more recent years—especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

While the Indonesian experience demonstrates that there is an alternative 'third way' to the binary choice between an unambiguously sec-

ular state or an all-out Islamist takeover, the political–religious upheavals that continue to plague the country’s democratization also show that the real litmus test comes after the initial honeymoon period is over and the process enters its consolidation phase. Meanwhile, the growing antagonism and polarization among Muslim activists and intellectuals call for closer attention to the substance of their ideas. That is what this intellectual history of contemporary Indonesian Islam tries to do.

*Intellectual history as history of ideas*

This contribution to Indonesian intellectual history comes with a caveat: its public life has been affected by a political particularity which the country inherited from its former colonial masters. From their European metropole, the Dutch brought with them a domestic phenomenon known as ‘*verzuiling*’ (pillarization, or *aliranisasi* in Indonesian). This refers to the fragmentation of Dutch political, religious, social, cultural and educational life into silo-like segments: Protestant, Catholic, secular, the last of which can in turn be broken down into conservative–liberal, social–democrat and socialist–communist subdivisions.<sup>11</sup> This has left an indelible imprint on Indonesian society, in the sense that pillarization continues to be mirrored in the country’s various *aliran* or ideological trends, which have shaped the conceptualization of the political construct of the Indonesian republic, the structuring of actual political life in postcolonial Indonesia, and even the way in which the country’s contemporary intellectual discourses have evolved.

There are two reasons for keeping this phenomenon in mind. First of all, it provides a proportionate perspective on Muslim discourse, helping observers not to lose sight of the fact that the account which follows forms only one of several parallel narratives that together constitute the intellectual history of contemporary Indonesia. Secondly—and in contrast to Dutch pillarization—official Indonesian interpretations of *aliran* refuse to give formal acknowledgement to agnosticism, let alone atheism, while the legal status of convictions or practices that fall outside the—originally six, now only five—officially recognized religions, such as Confucianism and Javanism (*kejawen*, also known as *kebatinan* and *kepercayaan*), remains ambiguous and precarious.<sup>12</sup> This issue of recognition and non-recognition of certain existing *aliran*

## INTRODUCTION

is a fixed feature of political and religious debates in postcolonial Indonesia, and has repercussions for the interpretation of pluralism in terms of religious freedom and tolerance and, by extension, the status of human rights in Indonesia. Having said that, also within this wider context, the notions of secularism, pluralism and liberalism are important subjects of debate between Muslim and non-Muslim Indonesians. However, since 2005 they are even more hotly contested among Indonesian Muslims themselves, pitching those who favor explicit Islamic political agendas against others who wish to retain existing constitutional structures, while at the same time accommodating the moral compass provided by Islam's doctrinal teachings. Thus secularism, pluralism and liberalism have become central motifs to the litmus test which Indonesia's democratization process is facing now that it has entered its consolidation phase.

In seeking to analyze the rise of the latest generation of Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia, this study can be considered a sequel to the Indonesian part covered in my previous book, *Cosmopolitans and Heretics: New Muslim Intellectuals and the Study of Islam*. There I focussed on one particular individual, Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005), who had emerged as one of Indonesia's leading public intellectuals of the first postcolonial generation, eventually rising to the iconic status of *guru bangsa* or 'teacher of the nation'.<sup>13</sup> The present book extends and expands the investigation to groups of intellectual activists emerging in the wake of Madjid's ground-breaking work. In doing so I believe it is important to remain acutely aware of John Sidel's caution against the over-amplification of the role of individuals, as he claims is the case with Robert Hefner's *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. At the same time, Sidel is willing to admit the significance of the fact that, by the end of the twentieth century, Muslim religious leaders were holding the two top public offices in the land.<sup>14</sup> So, while he does not deny the importance of such figures in present-day Indonesian public life, Sidel wants to cut them down to size by questioning to what extent these intellectuals can really be qualified as the 'great democrats' they have been turned into by public opinion and some scholars.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, by 2010, both Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid had passed away, while Amien Rais had effectively retired from active politics by stepping down as people's assembly speaker and leader of PAN. In the intervening time, Indonesia witnessed the rise of

new and younger Muslim thinkers, scholars, writers and activists. Groomed by Indonesia's remarkably pluralist and innovative Islamic education system, this emergent Islamic intelligentsia is certainly indebted to these predecessors, who have been instrumental in shaping a comparatively open, forward-looking and diverse intellectual climate. However, these new intellectuals have not only shown to be critical heirs and less reliant on the guidance of a few very high-profile public intellectuals; they are also more inclined to networking and increased cooperative activism across institutional and ideological boundaries. Notwithstanding the fact that some of these second- and third-generation postcolonial intellectuals have been foregrounded as the public faces of the latest trends in Indonesian Islamic thinking, this does not necessarily mean that they also offer a coherent system of thought or even present the most profound ideas.

The current absence of any real *prima donnas* is not only a result of the network approach, the use of new social media, or the increased discursive competition as the diversity of voices grows; it is also the outcome of demographic developments, namely the explosive growth of an educated Muslim middle class, both in absolute numbers and in proportion to the country's total population. Put together, these developments lead to the formation of new ways in which ideas are generated and disseminated, such as 'crowd thinking', as Anies Baswedan, rector of Paramadina University in Jakarta, pointed out in an interview.<sup>16</sup> While not denying the value of mapping such networks of circulation and accumulation of discursive power, these factors do not detract from the importance of continuing to analyze the substance of the ideas put forward by individual thinkers which are currently circulating in these milieus. As one group of young intellectuals formulated it: 'the absence of a big bang' does not mean that present-day Indonesian Muslim discourse is not producing anything of interest. Instead of introducing big sweeping ideas, the intellectuals of today engage in more detailed and in-depth analyses.<sup>17</sup>

Also seeing the merit of Sidel's earlier observation that Hefner's focus on individual thinkers obscures the working of social mechanisms, in another assessment of the interplay between reality, manipulation and rationalization of the religion factor in the transition from New Order to *Reformasi*, Johan Meuleman pleads for a comprehensive analytical model that addresses local, national and international dimensions. At the same time, Meuleman also highlights a shortfall in

## INTRODUCTION

Sidel's perspective which points directly at what the present study seeks to achieve:

[Sidel] overstates the social role of the Indonesian *madrasahs*—as distinguished from *pesantrens* and Western-type schools—in Indonesian society in general and in the development of reformist or urban middle class Islam in particular. On the other hand, Sidel appears to underestimate the contributions of *pesantrens* and IAINs (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*—State Institute for Islamic Sciences), with their accompanying institutions such as discussion and study groups, to the social emancipation of large groups of Muslims and the development among them of pluralist and democratic ideas.<sup>18</sup>

So, while conscious of the relevance of the structural dimensions of political, social and cultural contexts, the present investigation has the ambition of being, first and foremost, a substantive intellectual history; a history of ideas telling the story of those conceptualizing and formulating new ways of thinking about religion and translating these into agendas for reform, addressing some of the most pressing issues that Indonesia faces today. One challenge in providing such insights into contemporary Muslim thinking in Indonesia is the absence of any systematic meta-narratives. The preferred format of Indonesian intellectuals for presenting their ideas is the essay, the opinion piece in one of the major newspapers, and increasingly the blog or other online outlets. Consequently, most publications in book form are edited volumes of collected essays and articles. The scarcity of monographs forces the intellectual historian to try piecing together a coherent picture from these often scattered publications, which in Indonesia also tend to go rapidly out of print.

The ideas of these Muslim thinkers and writers are not just interesting as an intellectual–historical phenomenon in present-day Indonesia. Having leaped from a traditional Muslim worldview to what can be called a postmodern outlook, or adjusting reformist ideas to a new appreciation for the Islamic heritage, their experiences also suggest that tradition, modernity and postmodernity are not necessarily successive stages in intellectual history or bound by a linear progression. For that reason this contribution to the history of ideas in post-Suharto Indonesia has some other ambitions as well.

In order to examine how the domestic role of Islamic thought in indigenizing or localizing Islam and nation-building relates to wider international and trans-regional contexts, it is also important to place

Indonesia's contemporary Muslim thinking in the global settings of not just the rest of the Muslim world, but also of other non-Western intellectual developments. For discerning such connections and contacts, and understanding the mechanics of borrowing and adaptation, I benefited from the concept of 'the circulation of ideas' in Bose and Manjappa's *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones*, which deals with South Asia and the Indian Ocean.<sup>19</sup> Equally useful is Peter Mandaville's application to his own work on transglobal Islam of Edward Said's essay on 'travelling theory' as developed in *The World, the Text and the Critic*.<sup>20</sup> I also intend to use Said's notion for relating my account to intellectual historiography in the West. As noted by the literary scholar and intellectual historian Bruce Robbins, 'it is the holding together of contradictory professional logics under the heading "Travelling Theory", that has made that essay and title so widely influential'.<sup>21</sup>

While chronologically extending and topically contrasting with other intellectual histories of modern Indonesia, I also draw on and enter into conversation with the historiographies by some of the protagonists of this book, and thus offer both insider and outsider perspectives on the issues at hand. As an intellectual history tracing the ways in which ideas circulate and mapping the directions of travelling theories, my account will privilege close readings of texts over analyses of sociological and institutional structures or ideological positions. This is not to say that by writing in a substantive way about the history of ideas, the question of the relation between knowledge and power will be avoided altogether. However, in terms of relating this book to the generic studies of Western intellectual history, rather than following the approach of classics like Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* or Julian Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, as Indonesian scholars like Dawam Rahardjo, Syafii Anwar, Yudi Latif and Luthfi Assyaukanie have done, the present project has more affinity with Zygmunt Bauman's *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*. That book sketches the trajectories that turned intellectuals from gamekeepers into gardeners and draws a contrast between intellectuals as legislators and as interpreters, qualifying them as specialists of translation between cultures.<sup>22</sup> Bauman's relevance extends even further, as his criticism of consumerism touches on the commodification of religion, which is very much present as a background phenomenon to contemporary Muslim intellectualism in Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

My thinking about intellectuals and the history of ideas has been further stimulated by the work of the earlier mentioned Bruce Robbins. In particular how in his *Secular Vocations* he calls into question the simplistic binary between the death of the intellectual as a freewheeling *Luftmensch*, for which there is no room in 'our compartmentalized commodified, bureaucratic world', and the 'near total absorption of intellectual life by the universities'.<sup>23</sup> It unmasks the incongruence between the 'almost uncontested ethico-epistemological denial of anyone's right or ability to represent *others*' that has 'helped bind together the poststructuralist left's otherwise divergent moral and epistemological impulses' and what scholars in the humanities actually do: representing others.<sup>24</sup> Joining Edward Said in stepping out of a particular poststructuralist discourse has convinced Robbins that representation can be both authentic and legitimate. On the basis of his contrarian interpretation of the career of the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, he thinks it is actually possible to arrive at a greater democracy of representation. Navigating between the essentialist universalism of the free-floating intellectual and the fragmentation of academic disciplines locked in their respective ivory towers, Robbins suggests that such an 'opposition is a false one; the profession and its outside have no firm boundary but are mutually interdependent'.<sup>25</sup>

The interdependency underlying Robbins' toned-down interpretation of intellectual professionalism as 'secular vocations' also informs the modesty of his 'comparative cosmopolitanism', which is driven by the same unpretentious kind of generalization and synthesis without laying claim to totalizing universality.<sup>26</sup> Instead of giving up cosmopolitanism as a false universal, Robbins sees it as an 'impulse to knowledge that is shared with others by breaking down the dichotomy between local informants and cosmopolitan interpreters'.<sup>27</sup> Paralleling Bauman's qualification of intellectuals as translators between cultures, Robbins' reading turns them into cosmopolitan intermediaries. The accumulating instances of cosmopolitanism in the world today are not just helpful in transcending this simplistic binary of universal and particular by articulating instead the 'many diverse and overlapping syncreticisms and secularisms', they offer also a prospect of avoiding complete cultural relativism by adding a normative edge to multiculturalism without succumbing to the philosophical ambitions of universalism.<sup>28</sup> It will be instructive to establish how Robbins' alternative propositions fit with what Muslim intellectuals are doing in Indonesia today.

Under the influence of a worldwide obsession with political Islam, much of the literature on the contemporary Muslim world published since the early 2000s has been dominated by a securitization agenda. As a spin-off from this, the relationship between Islam, statehood and democracy has become another important scholarly preoccupation. Unfortunately, these subjects are generally treated in a reductionist manner. The actual situation within the Islamic tradition and its relations with the outside world are much more complicated than suggested by this rapidly growing body of writings. Muslims have their own competing views and often conflicting agendas, but also shared ideas and visions of the role of religion in their societies. Failure to appreciate that complexity and plurality by holding on to essentialist views of Islam obscures the reality that the lines separating Islamic traditionalists, reformists, modernists and revivalists, secular-minded Muslims and Islamists are often blurred. Also cavalier distinctions between moderates, liberals and radicals are so burdened with meanings and connotations that they have become value-laden ascriptions rather than accurate descriptions. All this also applies to the taxonomy of Islam in Indonesia.

Therefore, this is not a study of Islamic political ideas in Indonesia per se. Although politics do shape to a large extent the climate in which public debates on the role of religion in Muslim societies take place, this book wants to look beyond events and engage with the substance of these Islamic discourses. While secularism, pluralism and liberalism are an important feature in the current debates on Islam and politics in Indonesia, these three concepts do not form the main subject either. In fact, it is my contention that they are shorthand for more complex and far-reaching issues that are stake. At the same time, as a result of MUI issuing the controversial Fatwa 7, they provide a motive for writing an account of the development of thinking about religion in post-Suharto Indonesia. As concepts of enduring attraction and repulsion, they also offer an appropriate motif for arranging the narrative of this book. What I hope to show is that by turning them into 'isms', the *ideological* dimensions of secularity, plurality and liberty have been over-amplified, while the underlying multifaceted *ideas* are obscured, thus diverting attention from the difficult challenges Indonesia is facing today. By taking a look at the substance of Islamic discourses, I anticipate finding a more accurate alternative terminology which better reflects what is at stake in these intellectual debates.



## INTRODUCTION

By engaging with the substance of contemporary Indonesian thought about Islam, this book aims to present the contest for society, ideas and values found in the writings of the Muslim thinkers who conceptualize and formulate these discourses, and activists who are trying to find ways to give them a practical articulation and concrete implementation. In fact, as one Indonesian intellectual perceptively noted: even those on different sides in the confrontation between 'Islam and the West', which dominates so much of the attention for the current Muslim world, agree that we are dealing with what former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has called 'a war of ideas', or what Islamic militants refer to as a *ghazwul fikri*—an 'intellectual invasion'.<sup>29</sup>

Such a history of ideas cannot be divorced from recent Indonesian political experiences and the structural dimensions of the country's system of government, nor can the substance of contemporary Indonesian Muslim thought be discussed in isolation from the wider social, cultural and institutional contexts that shape its discursive formations. In that sense the book seeks to complement the growing body of work by social scientists, who have—as John Bowen argues—turned Indonesia into one of the major sites for 'studying social diversity, political ideas, and religious commitment' in the contemporary Muslim world.<sup>30</sup> As one of the leading anthropologists working on Indonesian Islam, he advocates approaching the study of religion as a field of 'discursive practices'.<sup>31</sup> The aim of the resulting micro-level case studies is not limited to giving detailed insights into varying repertoires of Islamic public reasoning. They also have the ambition of raising Muslim thought to the meta-levels of more abstract dealings with religion, tradition and universalist norms, using the specificities of the Indonesian situation to point toward 'issues facing citizens in all areas of the world'.<sup>32</sup> Mapping the critical-philosophical and theoretical extrapolations by Muslim intellectuals, the present book aims to add to the picture of 'Indonesia as a site of particularly marked struggles to bring together norms and values derived from Islam, local cultures and from international public life'.<sup>33</sup>

### *Outline of the book*

Having explained the intentions of this book, the first chapter will provide a context for the new Islamic discourses in question, sketching the contours of both the political and intellectual settings in which these

ideas have evolved. The second chapter is primarily intended to help readers find their bearings in the vibrant diversity that is so characteristic of the Indonesian Muslim milieu. It begins with an orientational mapping of the intellectual landscape in which progressive thinking has come to fruition and then proceeds with profiles of clusters of Muslim intellectuals and individuals who have contributed to these new discursive formations. Although the substantial number of organizations and individual intellectuals presented in this section may seem like a digression from the professed objective of dealing with the substance of present-day Muslim intellectualism, the level of detail in this overview of discourses and interlocutors is meant to illustrate the increasing diversity in the contestation of ideas and values among Indonesia's Muslims at the beginning of the twenty-first century, not just between progressives and reactionaries, but also manifested by the different and often competing sub-discourses within the progressive bloc.

Chapter three forms the hinge around which this book revolves. An important part of the work of intellectuals who reached intellectual maturity in the post-Suharto years consists in the critical engagement with their mentors and peers from preceding generations. Such critiques, often inspired by postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theorizing, may be subversive and deconstructionist, but not necessarily nihilistic in their intentions or destructive in their outcomes. Quite the contrary, as will become clear from the thematic chapters that follow: they are a propaedeutics to a constructive or reconstructive effort towards changing things, transforming Islam and therewith Muslim society, by making positive contributions to political theory, legal reform, human rights, education, scholarship and spiritual wellbeing—in short, human felicity. A detailed unpacking of how these intellectuals evaluate the legacy of their predecessors will not just articulate contrasts between successive generations, but also illuminate the way in which Islamic thinking, is progressing by drawing on a particular set of new revisionist readings of the Islamic tradition proposed by Arab *turathiyyun*, or heritage thinkers from the 1970s and 1980s, but also by sourcing a wide array of ideas emanating from postcolonial theory and Western postmodern philosophy. Their reactionary counterparts often dismiss this eclectic mix as succumbing to an invasion of foreign ideas that will alienate Muslims from their religion.

Chapter four is the most political chapter of this book in the conventional sense of the word. Dealing with the relation between statehood,

## INTRODUCTION

religion and governance, it interrogates the persisting problems—partly semantic, partly conceptual—with terms such as secularization and secularism. The discussion is then contextualized into the Indonesian setting by linking it to the nexus formed by the Pancasila Doctrine and the controversial Jakarta Charter, which has dominated much of the Islamic political discourses since independence and seems to have lost nothing in importance at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Adding to the complexity is the emergence of alternatives proposed by both present-day progressive and reactionary Muslims. Some progressive intellectuals are unabashed self-confessed liberals, while others add revisions of the secularization thesis and contributions to the comparative study of democracy to their repertoire of ideas. From the reactionary side these are countered with new interpretations of the so-called ‘Covenant of Medina’, which was concluded by Prophet Muhammad and his Companions with the Arab and Jewish tribes of the Arabian oasis town of Yathrib after it had become their place of refuge in 622 CE. Others feel inspired by the historical caliphate and advocate its restoration on a regional or global scale as the most appropriate form of political organization for Muslims.

The discussions of Islamic law in Chapter five are closely connected to and sometimes intersecting with the preceding chapter. As a further reflection of the growing polarization between different intellectual and ideological camps, the chapter will draw the contours of two discourses dealing with the letter and the spirit of the law respectively. Before unpacking some exponents of both approaches, the emergence of these strands of thought are situated in the context of postcolonial Islamic legal thinking in the early years of the republic. When the rejection of the Jakarta Charter in the early *Reformasi* years again closed off the road to a constitutional reference to shari‘a, the proponents of a formalization of Islamic law through the inclusion of *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence in the legal framework of Indonesia found a new opportunity in the devolution of powers from the national to the regional and local levels of state administration as part of the decentralization of Indonesia’s system of governance. Provincial and district authorities in areas with a strong conservative or reactionary Muslim presence used the instrument of local government orders to issue religious regulations pertaining to what they considered proper Islamic conduct; these are the *peraturan daerah syariat*, or *perda syariat* for short. From the progressive bloc issues an alternative discourse which seeks to

counter this creeping ‘shari‘atization’ of Indonesian society with a substantivist reading of Islamic legal thinking, by focussing on the so-called *maqasid al-shari‘a* or objectives of shari‘a. This strand of thought taps into a wider trend that is affecting the philosophy of law in other parts of the Muslim world as well, taking discussions to a greater degree of fundamental ethical thinking than the field of *usul al-fiqh*, the foundations of jurisprudence which provide the methodological toolbox for jurists. This does not mean that preoccupation with the substance of Islamic law is entirely restricted to theoretical abstraction. Some progressive intellectuals have more applied interests or even adopted a hands-on approach, by working on concrete themes or trading the role of interpreters for that of legislators by drafting alternative legal codes.

The final chapter examines how the contestation of the notions of secularism, liberalism and pluralism culminates in debates on how to deal with Indonesia’s religious plurality. The central importance of that issue is already reflected in the text of MUI’s Fatwa 7, which puts pluralism before the other two terms, notwithstanding the fact that in most conversations the sequence begins with secularism. There is an interesting convergence of the progressive and reactionary narratives, in that they both draw on the theologies of religions formulated by Christian theologians and philosophers of religion, which distinguish between exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists, but obviously with very different objectives. Advocates of undiluted religious pluralism link their principled stance to universal human rights standards, driven by the argument that its Western provenance should not be used as an excuse to make reservations or exclusions for Muslims. Similarly, this chapter will show that both progressive and reactionary Muslims consider education, and in particular tertiary education and the academic study of Islam, as areas of core importance for fostering religious pluralism or stemming its detrimental effects for the integrity of Islam’s doctrinal teachings respectively.

Relating the various themes and subjects discussed in the preceding chapters to the three contentious terms that were condemned in the fatwa of Indonesia’s Council of Muslim Scholars, the conclusion proposes a rephrasing and reformulation of secularism, liberalism and pluralism, suggesting that alternative terms such as secularity, liberty, toleration and freedom of thought reflect more accurately what is at stake in these Muslim debates.

## SECULARISM, PLURALISM AND LIBERALISM IN INDONESIAN MUSLIM CONTEXTS

In the final years of the twentieth century and the first decade of the new millennium, Indonesia found itself at a critical juncture in its political history. After decades of authoritarian rule under both its founding President Sukarno and the military usurper General Suharto, the country embarked on its first genuine and sustained experiment with democratization. Initially this created a great degree of instability, and in the six years between 1998 and 2004 Indonesia would have no less than four presidents, twice as many as in the preceding half century.

The time that has passed since the mid-1990s can be divided into three periods. First came the unravelling of General Suharto's hold on power and very brief replacement by his Minister of Technology and protégé B. J. Habibie, which heralded the gradual implosion of the *Orde Baru* or New Order Regime (1995–9). This was followed by the ill-fated presidency of the increasingly erratic Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001).<sup>1</sup> In 2001, this grandson of the founder of Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim organization, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) and son of a former minister of religious affairs, was impeached and replaced by a scion of another political dynasty: the daughter of the country's first president, Megawati Sukarnoputri (b.1947). However, partly because of that association with the politics of the Old Order (1945–65) and partly due to the continuing resistance among conservative politicians against a female president, she was unable to hang on

to the presidency when she failed to secure a re-election in 2004. With this ended the first turbulent five years of the *Reformasi* era (1999–2004). The electoral victory of retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (b.1949, often abbreviated to ‘SBY’) constitutes not only a rehabilitation of sorts for the armed forces, who played a prominent role in Indonesian politics ever since the independence struggle of the 1940s, but also of the New Order regime. As the son-in-law of an influential general in Suharto’s early entourage, and as an army officer who played a significant political role of his own during the final years of New Order as well as in the first *Reformasi* administration, SBY’s ascension to the highest office in the land can be regarded as a partial comeback for New Order. At the same time, the even greater mandate he managed to secure as the leader of a new political party by winning a landslide victory in the third free and openly contested round of national elections of 2009 also shows that Indonesia’s political landscape has structurally changed. Whether SBY has managed to deliver on the expectations of his second term in office is another matter; this book also has the ambition to contribute to answering that question.

### *The Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI)*

Before briefly surveying developments during the three periods I have identified above, it is necessary to go a few years further back in time and flag up an earlier political phenomenon that is also very germane to a book that is conceived as an intellectual history of contemporary Muslim thought in Indonesia: the state-supported establishment, in 1990, of an Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia* (ICMI).<sup>2</sup> Against a background of worldwide salience of political Islam and the proliferation of Islamic activism in many parts of the Muslim world from the late 1970s onwards, ICMI’s foundation stands out as an affirmation of the increased significance of Muslim technocrats, professionals and intellectuals in general in Indonesian public life, and as an indication of how political Islam manages to reinvent itself in a rather unique Indonesian way. It forms the culmination of decades of sounding each other out on the part of both the government and the country’s Muslim bloc. What eventually brought the regime and Muslim intellectuals together was the preoccupation and excitement of both camps to move Indonesia into the next phase of its development policy under the slo-

gan *lepas-landas*, or 'taking off'. One observer and proponent of social movement theory, Yudi Latif, characterizes it as a counter-hegemonic discourse entering the public mainstream.<sup>3</sup>

ICMI's fate in post-Suharto Indonesia also serves as a barometer for the influence of the powers-that-be under the drastically changing political circumstances around the turn of the century. The germination of this trajectory of alternative Islamic activism can actually be traced back to the very beginning of the New Order. Sukarno's increasingly left-leaning ideological policies had been disastrous for Indonesia's economy, and the first priority of the new regime was to work towards the country's economic recovery through a pragmatic development policy, with the armed forces taking a lead role under the principle of its *dwifungsi* or 'dual function' of ensuring political security by its responsibility for national defense and domestic law and order, as well as economic stability through its non-military role in development policy-making and private commerce. To achieve that goal, the new leadership also envisaged a role for Muslim technocrats and other professionals in contributing to that effort. In order to mobilize that potential the government resorted to a carrot-and-stick policy; but wielded the latter more frequently than it offered the former. To characterize the New Order's initial attitude towards Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia, Yudi Latif borrows Herbert Feith's expression 'repressive developmentalism'.<sup>4</sup> A certain segment of Indonesia's Muslim intellectual community was nevertheless willing to cooperate with the regime. This heralded the beginning of a period in which religion found a new accommodation in the public sphere: as long as Muslim actors abided by the reaffirmation of Indonesia's foundational state doctrine of Pancasila or Five Principles, and steered clear of Islamic party politics, they could expect to be given a role in helping to manage Indonesia's progress towards economic prosperity.<sup>5</sup> Over time Muslim community leaders, technocrats, professionals, intellectuals and other activists became increasingly self-confident in their roles as social and political actors in a society that—as a whole—was becoming unmistakably more assertive in expressing its religiosity, both in terms of personal piety and inculcating the underlying values into public life. In return for their loyalty to the regime and the Pancasila Doctrine, the government responded by expanding the space for such initiatives. When in the late 1980s General Suharto fell out with some of his old army cronies, he actually turned to this emergent Muslim bloc as a potential new political ally.

Various observers of political and religious developments in contemporary Indonesia, as well as some of the actors who were involved in these events, have provided accounts of the establishment of ICMI.<sup>6</sup> Although these narratives differ in the details, it is generally agreed that what had started out as an impromptu plan of five Muslim student leaders for a symposium at Brawijaya University in the East Javanese town of Malang was quickly turned into a grander scheme when, in trying to get the rector's permission, they sought the support of two senior Muslim intellectuals: Imaduddin Abdulrahim (1931–2008), a US-trained engineer and former Muslim student leader, and M. Dawam Rahardjo (b.1942), an economist and social activist with links to the Muhammadiyah.<sup>7</sup> This duo suggested turning the one-off campus event into a more sustained effort at bringing various groups of Muslim intellectuals together. In order to get the necessary official support for this, the students in question—together with Rahardjo, Abdulrahim and journalist M. Syafii Anwar (b.1953)—went to see Suharto's confidant, B. J. Habibie. Before the latter would take any action or even express support, it was inevitable that he would first consult the president. Seeing an opportunity to mobilize a new political support base, Suharto gave his consent and instructed Habibie to take charge of what was now turned into a government-led initiative for a formal discussion platform that would bring together Muslim government officials, technocrats, academics, activists and—last, but certainly not least—the leaders of Indonesia's Muslim mass organizations.

In his book on the role of Muslim intellectuals under the New Order, Syafii Anwar presents ICMI as his primary case study, characterizing it as a manifestation of the 'repolitization of Islam'.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Dawam Rahardjo contributed an introduction to Nasrullah Ali-Fauzi's book on the subject, entitled *ICMI: Between Status Quo and Democracy*.<sup>9</sup> Reflecting the ambiguity of the title, it contains contributions by supporters and sceptics, as well as detractors and even outright opponents of ICMI. The main vulnerability that plagued the organization from the outset was the refusal of a key Muslim intellectual, NU leader and future president Abdurrahman Wahid, to sign up to the project. Instead he founded an alternative, more inclusivist and critical body of intellectuals called *Forum Demokrasi*. The wide spectrum of divergent interpretations, both in favor of and in opposition to ICMI, belied the government's optimism of turning ICMI into a broadly carried alternative support base for the New Order and foreshadowed the fragmentation that would soon characterize Indonesia's



political landscape, until these fissures began affecting the regime itself, leading to its eventual collapse.

Aside from senior Indonesian intellectuals, who each had their own reasons for giving certain representations of what was envisaged with ICMI and for offering different interpretations of its significance, political scientist Yudi Latif has taken to task veteran outside observers such as William Liddle and Robert Hefner for their readings of ICMI's role in the later Suharto years. According to Latif, Liddle ignored the historicity and global dimensions of Muslim intellectual movements, while Hefner failed to situate his account of the emergence of ICMI 'within the web of actual power relations' in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Hefner's focus on the rising middle class as a critical factor in the success of Muslim intellectualism ignores the differentiated social origins of the Muslim intelligentsia, thus wrongly privileging economic interest at the expense of cultural and symbolic factors, which are—according to Latif—just as important. 'In the light of these theoretical perspectives', he insists that 'the rise of the ICMI can be understood as the result of an interactional process'.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, French researchers Andrée Feillard and Rémy Madinier have shown that, after its initial success as a regime-friendly umbrella organization bringing together a broad spectrum of intellectuals of varying Muslim backgrounds, this ideological diversity and the inevitably resulting differences of opinion on how to relate and be loyal to the regime led to ICMI's fragmentation and its eventual demise as key figures became disenchanted, leading either to their voluntary departure or an unceremonious expulsion from the organization.<sup>12</sup> Leading political scientist Bahtiar Effendy concludes that, even though it has been perceived as a 'watershed of the state's politics of accommodation towards Islam', its importance is nevertheless outweighed by the continuing structural significance of Muslim mass organizations such as the Muhammadiyah and NU, as well as state- and regime-related institutions like the New Order's government party Golkar, MUI, and the state bureaucracy in general.<sup>13</sup> This situation prefigures the resilience of existing power structures in Indonesia and their ability to survive regime change.

### *The final years of the New Order (1995–9)*

Although the year started with celebrations to commemorate fifty years of independence, 1995 also saw an upsurge in politically moti-

vated religious violence which would mar the final years of Suharto's rule, as he and his government tried to come to terms with a rapidly changing globalizing world. As the internet began making inroads into Indonesia's mediascape and the main newspapers set up their first homepages, state sovereignty and nationalist protectionism felt under siege from the free exchange of goods, people and ideas promoted by a worldwide surge of (neo-)liberalism.<sup>14</sup>

On the occasion of the republic's half centenary, Indonesia tried to demonstrate its democratic credentials and respect for human rights by releasing former ministers from the Sukarno era, now ageing political prisoners who had been held captive for thirty years. However, its unforeseen effect was a campaign on the part of young Muslim activists demanding an amnesty for all imprisoned Islamic activists as well, while the detractors of ICMI responded by establishing alternative platforms and organizations for safeguarding national unity by expressing their unwavering support for the Pancasila Doctrine.<sup>15</sup> Another major concern for the New Order regime was the establishment of an alliance uniting the Indonesian Democratic Party (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*, PDI), led by Suharto's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri, Abdurrahman Wahid's NU, and what the government called 'Organizations Without Form' (*Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk*, OTB). The regime accused leading dissidents such as author and Magsaysay Prize laureate Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), the academic George Aditjondro (b.1946) and union leader Muchtar Pakpahan (b.1953) of being the main instigators behind these, from the regime's point of view, undesirable initiatives.<sup>16</sup>

Within a year real cracks began to appear, as signs of social decomposition heralded the 'end of the ethnic pact and religious peace' that the New Order had tried to maintain for decades.<sup>17</sup> In a desperate attempt to prop itself up, the regime attacked the PDI–NU tandem by orchestrating Megawati's ousting from her position as party leader and a failed bid to depose Abdurrahman Wahid from his top seat in the NU. On a personal level, in spite of being in failing health and having to cope with the recent death of his wife, the ageing Suharto tried to keep his unyielding grip on power by announcing his candidacy for a seventh term in office. All this took place against the background of clashes between indigenous Dayaks and Madurese migrants in West Kalimantan and new fermentations in the notoriously rebellious northern Sumatran province of Aceh, while Muslim gangs elsewhere turned

to burning churches and assaulting the Sino-Indonesian community. Yusril Ihza Mahendra (b.1956), a legal scholar and future leader of the Islamic Crescent Star Party (*Partai Bulan Bintang*, PBB), was not helping the situation at all when he cast doubt on the very validity of the universal declaration of human rights by interpreting it as a disenfranchisement of Muslims. This unravelling of Indonesia's social fabric led veteran chronicler François Raillon to conclude that 'the real debate for the future was about the place of Islam in society and the modalities for maintaining the interethnic compromise'.<sup>18</sup>

Suharto's last full year in power—1997—turned into a veritable *annus horribilis*, as Indonesia felt the full impact of the international currency crisis and was put at the mercy of the IMF. Despite the governing party Golkar's victory in the national elections, the regime was unable to quell a rebellion in ICMI against Suharto's intention to seek yet another presidential mandate. More than a thousand Muslim intellectuals proposed Muhammadiyah leader Amien Rais (b.1944) as an alternative candidate, while the Islamic periodical *Ummat* added to the pressure by naming him their 'man of the year'.<sup>19</sup> As a result, even though he occupied a key position within ICMI, Rais was expelled from the organization and soon what had been envisaged as a rainbow coalition of Muslim New Order loyalists eroded, until the only ones left to prop up Suharto were Muslim government bureaucrats and—ironically—representatives of Islamist organizations such as the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, DDII) and the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam*, KISDI), which was under the patronage of Suharto's then son-in-law, Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto (b.1951) and his coterie of so-called 'Green Generals'. Intent on playing up their Islamic credentials, these officers even maintained their own think tank, the Center for Policy and Development Studies (CPDS), led by a young political scientist, Fadli Zon (b.1971), and future Muhammadiyah leader Sirajuddin (Din) Syamsuddin (b.1958).<sup>20</sup>

In the following year, events only accelerated, when thousands of students began taking to the streets in order to protest against Suharto's re-election. In the ensuing riots twelve hundred lost their lives, not least due to Prabowo and KISDI's involvement in sowing dissent within the Muslim camp by sending in thugs associated with self-proclaimed Islamist vigilante organizations. In order to ensure the survival of the

regime, an internal handing-over of power became inevitable and during the final machinations it became clear that the Muslim bloc was the new political lynchpin. While Amien Rais was posturing as the main face of the opposition and NU leader Abdurrahman Wahid left everybody guessing where his ultimate loyalty lay, Suharto sought the advice of nine influential Muslim intellectuals, including Nurcholish Madjid, who—except for his association with ICMI—was not affiliated to any political party or Islamic mass organization. Finally relenting to their counsel, on 21 May 1998 Suharto agreed to hand over the reins to B. J. Habibie. Without a power base of his own and regarded as the epithet of New Order nepotism, Habibie tried to secure his political future by embarking on a ‘de-Suharto-zation’ campaign of major companies and the development of a ‘civil religious society’ by curtailing the military’s double function, and promising guarantees of fundamental liberties and respect for human rights.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the new People’s Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, MPR) eroded presidential powers by passing resolutions that saw to the abolition of the special powers accorded to the presidency, the restriction of presidential mandates to a maximum of two terms, the launch of an anti-corruption campaign without special consideration for the former president and other office holders under the New Order, as well as the degradation of Pancasila’s monopoly as the sole political principle undergirding the Indonesian state.<sup>22</sup>

Although greeted with enthusiasm by the middle classes, the new measures would prove too little and too late to save Habibie’s political career. The newly opened political space was quickly filled by a proliferation of new political parties; no less than 130 had registered before the year was out, but there were only five serious contenders and most of these were led by familiar faces. Vying for power were a reincarnated Golkar under Akbar Tanjung (b.1945), who had spent his formative political years as leader of various Muslim student organizations; a reunified PDI-*Perjuangan* (struggle) of Megawati Sukarnoputri; and three major Muslim parties: the revamped New Order-era United Development Party (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, PPP) under NU stalwart Hamzah Haz (b.1940); Amien Rais’s National Mandate Party (*Partai Amanat Nasional*, PAN); and the NU’s National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*, PKB).<sup>23</sup> DDII activists and its highly effective youth wing were quick to establish more openly Islamist competitors, but they were dwarfed in size compared to those associated

with the mass organizations of the Muslim mainstream. There were no regional or ethnic parties (except for the Chinese), nor were the ones operating in the national political arena driven by clearly defined programs. Instead they must be seen as instruments in the hands of 'their founders, new and old politicians, members of the social elites and visionaries' who all focus on an urban electorate and who employ discourses of populist rhetoric.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the breakdown of law and order in the confusion accompanying this regime change, political violence erupted once again. However, it was now taking on a distinctive religious garb: Muslim vigilantes, youth gangs and self-defense militias (*PAM Swakarsa*) not only clashed along Islamic and Christian lines; there were also intra-Muslim attacks on, for example, traditionalist religious scholars accused of practising black magic. John Sidel describes this change in character as a shift from 'riots' to 'pogroms'.<sup>25</sup> This development occurred against the background of a generally uncertain political situation in the wake of New Order's collapse, which in its final years had sought to maintain its position through what two French experts on religion and politics in contemporary Indonesia have characterized as a murky mix of 'compromise, manipulation, and repression' of various Muslim actors.<sup>26</sup> In the ensuing chaos of 1998–9, it was very difficult to determine who held political responsibility for this escalation; conjectures as to the identity of those orchestrating the violence pointed variously in the direction of Suharto-sympathizers led by General Prabowo; the armed forces under its commander-in-chief Wiranto (b.1947); Habibie's supporters who wanted to discredit the PKB (a thesis held by its leader Abdurrahman Wahid); or—on the contrary—the acting president's enemies in an effort to destroy his chances for further office; and finally, the descendants of the victims of the 1965 anti-communist massacres eager to avenge the killing of their parents and grandparents.<sup>27</sup> These wild and widely varying speculations are symptomatic of differences and divides within Indonesian society that are only now able to surface, showing that plurality can also have an ugly side.

As the central government in the capital appeared weakened, regional separatists too saw this period as a window of opportunity to pursue with renewed vengeance their objectives of greater autonomy and a bigger share of local revenues. Under pressure, the transition government drafted a regional autonomy law that would rebalance state expenditures in favor of the provinces. This initiative set in

motion a sustained tendency towards decentralization and the devolution of powers from the central government to regional and local authorities.<sup>28</sup> While East Timor and Irian Jaya remained special cases of their own, the Riau Archipelago (which included the site of Habibie's pet project, Batam Island), Aceh and West Kalimantan all took full advantage of the erosion of the metropole's power.

*The dynastic failures of the early Reformasi era (1999–2004)*

But all this was not enough for Habibie to retain the presidency. And yet, while the New Order was dead, Indonesia's political system continued, because coming out on top were the scions of two Old Order political dynasties who had managed to recast themselves as key opposition figures of the late New Order years: Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri. While these two childhood friends were to preside over unprecedented constitutional and political reforms, it must be noted that while they adopted the democratic rhetoric of *Reformasi*, they did so with 'a paternalistic and authoritarian temperament'.<sup>29</sup> Thus, attempts at radical structural change ran into determined efforts by the elites to preserve the status quo of political practice.

Despite the victory secured by the PDI-P in the 1999 elections, its leader Megawati Sukarnoputri was denied the presidency by leading Muslim politicians who had fared considerably less well in the country's first free and fair elections. Trailing behind first runner-up Golkar, the PKB, PPP and PAN came respectively third, fourth and fifth. But a so-called Central Axis (*Poros Tengah*) engineered by Amien Rais managed to outmaneuver the anticipated Megawati–Tanjung ticket and also succeeded in frustrating PPP leader Hamzah Haz's ambitions for the vice-presidency.<sup>30</sup> The resulting compromise landed PKB leader Abdurrahman Wahid in the position of head of state with Megawati Sukarnoputri serving as his deputy, while Amien Rais became speaker of the MPR. Further negotiations between Wahid, Megawati, Rais, Tanjung and Wiranto led to a 'rainbow cabinet' that left no key player in the opposition, thus satisfying the political establishments of PDI-P, Golkar, the armed forces and the Muhammadiyah-NU bloc.<sup>31</sup> Whether it provided Indonesia with an efficient government capable of introducing and implementing the promised reforms is another matter.

However, the inauguration of Abdurrahman Wahid as president meant that a freethinking Muslim who broke all stereotypes of the reli-

gious scholar had taken the helm of the largest Muslim state in the world. In 2000, he repealed the Presidential Instruction of 1967 on Pancasila, confidently presenting a new Indonesia hailed by President Bill Clinton as 'the world's third democracy'. At the same time, Abdurrahman Wahid presided, albeit in a most offhand manner, over a heavily politicized administration reminiscent of the 1950s, when ministers had been at war with each other. Faced with tremendous foreign debts, Suharto's business cronies had to be left alone because the government needed these New Order capitalists to jumpstart Indonesia's teetering economy.<sup>32</sup> Another indication of the anarchy reigning in government circles was the resurgence of regional conflicts. Wary of the armed forces' political influence, Abdurrahman Wahid undermined the military's efficacy in responding to these threats by playing individuals such as Generals Wiranto and Prabowo against each other, as well as different branches of the armed forces, in particular the army and navy. As a consequence, Acehnese, Timorese and Papuan separatists were able to challenge the central government, while from Kalimantan to the Moluccas, locals and migrants, Muslims and Christians were fighting each other. Amidst this chaos, politicians led by MPR speaker Amien Rais continued to debate the issues of federalism by tabling two new autonomy laws that redefined the way Indonesia was administered. Each law undermined Java's preponderance in favor of more influence and freedom for the outlying provinces.<sup>33</sup>

Although a seasoned observer like François Raillon had been too pessimistic regarding Indonesia's territorial integrity as the country did indeed manage to remain intact, he nevertheless insists that 'defeats, troubles, and all kinds of crises' did not cease to multiply, with the decomposition process continuing as 'corruption, nepotism and collusion (KKN) proliferated'.<sup>34</sup> In the face of this spectre of change, old dignitaries and the military top brass banded together to manipulate public opinion with 'a quiet certitude that betrayed experience'.<sup>35</sup> Confronted with such a formidable opposition seeking to subvert his presidency, Abdurrahman Wahid had to mobilize all his cunning, expediency and arsenal of political stratagems to stave off challenges to his position. As the 'grand master of absence' seemingly operating by remote control, the president resorted to a tactic of 'extreme mobility' to throw off his adversaries and used the internationally explosive issue of East Timor to discredit the military, thus torpedoing the career of the politically ambitious General Wiranto.<sup>36</sup> However, in the face of

widespread separatist threats in places like Aceh, and violent disorder elsewhere, including lynchings and outright massacres on the part of Muslim militias and other vigilantes, the president could ill afford to alienate the armed forces too much. In fact, many Muslims were of the opinion that it was in fact Abdurrahman Wahid himself who was to blame for the death of their co-religionists in places such as the Moluccas, because of his failure to provide them with the means to defend themselves.

Former kingmaker Amien Rais shrewdly manipulated these sentiments to mobilize a coalition against the president. As speaker of the MPR, he could take credit for the passing of important resolutions on human rights; regional autonomy and the reinforcement of national unity; restrictions on the armed forces' parliamentary representation; and removing the police from military control. In consultation with Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, Golkar leader Akbar Tanjung, and the Sultan of Yogyakarta, Rais began orchestrating Abdurrahman Wahid's removal from power.<sup>37</sup> The president did not help himself by excluding PDI-P and Golkar from his second cabinet, instead favoring his own PKB and other Muslim parties, while at the same time alienating their constituencies by making public overtures to Israel. The new government's rising star was General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, whose new position as coordinating minister was comparable to that of a prime minister in all but title. The hatchet was finally thrown in the summer of 2001, spelling also the end of the *Reformasi* honeymoon. Increasingly isolated, Abdurrahman Wahid's days were numbered when he started firing his ministers one after the other, including two from the PBB and the newly formed Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan*, PK).<sup>38</sup> When he also tried to relieve SBY from his post, the opposition moved in: in July, Megawati Sukarnoputri took Abdurrahman Wahid's place as head of state and PPP leader Hamzah Haz was elected as the new vice president.<sup>39</sup> Instead of calling new elections, it was agreed that they would serve out the existing mandate, which would expire in 2004.

With Megawati as president, a sense of reality returned to the political stage. During her three years in power, Indonesia saw constitutional changes introducing a bicameral parliament and a directly elected head of state. Attempts led by Islamic parties PPP and the PBB to introduce a reference to Islamic law into the constitution along the lines of the 1945 Jakarta Charter were kept at bay, forcing the Islamists to shift tactics towards other opportunities offered by the prospects of



administrative decentralization, which will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters of this book. Local and regional conflicts were subdued (although in some cases only temporarily) with the signing of peace treaties and other accords, returning a degree of normalcy to the restive province of Aceh and other explosive regions and districts in the Moluccas and Poso in Central Sulawesi. On the other hand, important issues such as press freedom and the freedom of belief and practice of religion remained fragile.

However, Megawati's leadership style of 'authoritarian *realpolitik*' raised new questions.<sup>40</sup> With the replacement of impulsive revolutionary reform by a more conservative evolutionary pace, was Indonesia indeed refinding its stability by safeguarding national unity, establishing a normalization of economic life and upholding the rule of law? Or was this a restoration of another sort; a return to the Sukarno days of old, accompanied by a non-aligned and active foreign policy designed to restore Indonesian prestige in the international community?<sup>41</sup> Such speculations quickly receded into the background as Indonesia—just like the rest of the world—had to find a way to respond to a new threat: terrorist attacks by Islamic radicals.

The destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and subsequent atrocities on Indonesian soil turned the issue of religious violence into a matter of both global and domestic importance. As the first Muslim country to respond favorably to US President George W. Bush's 'war on terror', the polarization between so-called radical and moderate Muslims became a defining element of Indonesian politics in the years to come. In John Sidel's estimation, it also added a new ingredient to the already combustible mix of politico-religious violence: the much contested and heatedly debated concept of Jihad.<sup>42</sup> For Indonesia, the ripple effect of violent political Islam also extends into the issues of regional autonomy and separatism, as well as to more measured debates among different groups of Muslim intellectuals that form the substance of the investigations in this book.

At the same time, the persistence of 'business as usual' in the way the political game is played in Indonesia should not be underestimated.<sup>43</sup> In the face of the Central Axis of Muslim parties that had denied her the presidency in 1999, and which was already remobilized to thwart her again in the 2004 elections, Megawati forged an alliance with Akbar Tanjung to gain the support of his Golkar party.<sup>44</sup> Together with the ability of the military to withstand and even sabotage reforms

that undermined its vested interests by securing the active help of Megawati, all these developments affirm the longevity of what post-Arab Spring Egyptians call the *fulul*, or remnants, of the former regime. The military's fortunes also improved as the 'spectre of al-Qaeda' seemed to become an Indonesian reality in the wake of the Bali bombing of 2002 and a further attack on Jakarta's Marriott Hotel less than a year later.<sup>45</sup> Aside from fast-tracking the career of SBY, a more or less fortuitous side-effect was the blow it dealt to the reputation of radical vigilante movements such as *Laskar Jihad* and the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI), but even more so to the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*, MMI) and its leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir (b.1938), who now stood accused of also presiding over the shadowy *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI). The concomitant securitization of Indonesian politics was not only directed against pockets of Islamic radicalism, but also resulted in a hardening position towards separatists in Aceh and Irian Jaya. This trend was challenged by critical media, such as Goenawan Mohammad's weekly *Tempo*, and a host of NGOs and think tanks that had sprung up in the wake of *Reformasi*.<sup>46</sup> Notwithstanding the collaboration of Megawati's administration in America's war on terror, three leading Muslim intellectuals—Muhammadiyah chairman Ahmad Syafii Maarif (b.1935), the NU's Hasyim Muzadi (b.1944) and the academic Azyumardi Azra (b.1955)—used the opportunity of a brief meeting with President Bush on Bali to express their concerns over US policy towards the Middle East, insisting that violent political Islam has no indigenous roots in Indonesia and is feeding on rumours about anti-Muslim Western conspiracies.<sup>47</sup> Such mixed signals evince a certain ambiguity in Muslim attitudes towards fermentations of Islamic extremism, which an observer like Raillon considers symptomatic of what he provocatively qualifies as a degree of 'quasi schizophrenia' or 'autistic solitude', which appears to be affecting the collective consciousness of Indonesia's Muslims when confronted with excesses perpetrated by radicals claiming to represent Islam.<sup>48</sup>

However, in the end all politics is local, and a year ahead of the presidential elections scheduled for 2004 the various political groups began jockeying for position. The resulting speculative list of potential candidates was again indicative of the resilience of old power blocs and how their political manoeuvrings continued to stifle structural changes to the system itself. Apart from the incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri,

the secular–nationalist side of the spectrum also included two future chairmen of Golkar: the Sulawesi-born entrepreneur Jusuf Kalla (b.1944) and the Jakarta business tycoon Aburizal Bakrie (b.1946), as well as Indonesia’s media mogul Surya Paloh (b.1951), who would leave Golkar in 2011 to establish the National Democrat Party (*Partai Nasional Demokrat* or *NasDem*).<sup>49</sup> All had thrived under the New Order and continued to benefit from their government connections, even after Suharto’s resignation. On the military side, figures like Wiranto and Prabowo made their aspirations very evident too.<sup>50</sup> Most numerous, however, were the ‘presidentables’ from the Muslim bloc: Amien Rais, Hamzah Haz, PPP defector Zainuddin M. Z., PBB leader and justice minister Yusril Ihza Mahendra, as well as the chairmen of the NU, Hasyim Muzadi, and of the Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Syafii Maarif; even the disgraced Abdurrahman Wahid again threw in his hat. Also mentioned were the names of Nurcholish Madjid (pushed by Akbar Tanjung) and TV preacher Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym) as possible candidates without affiliations to either Islamic political parties or Muslim mass organizations.<sup>51</sup> The last two seemed to be the exceptions to the rule, because the overall picture appeared to suggest that the country had succumbed to ‘political nostalgia in favor of New Order and Golkar’.<sup>52</sup> Although still something of a dark horse, in this political climate, the odds of SBY as the candidate for the newly established Democrat Party (*Partai Demokrat*, PD), which promoted a vague notion of *nasionalisme religius* (religious nationalism), were rapidly improving.<sup>53</sup>

*Consolidating Reformasi or building a new dynasty? The SBY years (2004–14)*

Not surprising then that the retired general’s 2004 victory—with Jusuf Kalla taking the job of vice president—raised doubts about the prospects of *Reformasi*. Because when Amien Rais also disappeared from the scene as speaker of the MPR, this spelled the effective political end of the three main opponents to Suharto’s New Order. Even when SBY’s election is interpreted as a rejection of Megawati rather than an endorsement of a reinvented New Order, it still confirms the supreme survival instincts of Jakarta’s archetypical political elite.<sup>54</sup> Together with Golkar, PD demonstrated it was able to run the most efficient election machine, thus securing the presidency and vice-presidency for its nominees.<sup>55</sup> Called a new Suharto by some, in terms of the mysteri-

ous origins of his career, although holding far less effective power over the military and country, SBY was presented as the mythical Javanese *ksatria piningit* or ‘hidden knight’.<sup>56</sup> With a running mate who was everything he was not, the tandem SBY–Kalla made an attractive pair: a Javanese and a Bugi, a military man and a pious Muslim civilian, they attracted sufficient support from nationalists and Islamists alike.<sup>57</sup>

Building a ‘people’s coalition’ in which five Muslim parties joined his PD against a ‘national coalition’ led by the PDI-P and Golkar, the new administration’s first *Indonesia Bersatu* (United Indonesia) cabinet counted only four non-Muslim ministers—a marked contrast with Suharto’s early reliance on technocrats and army officers from Christian backgrounds. Despite having won the parliamentary elections, both Golkar and runner-up PDI-P had to witness PKS leader Hidayat Nur Wahid (b.1960) become speaker of the new assembly. However with a vice president who soon managed to oust Akbar Tanjung as Golkar chairman and impress with his handling of the Tsunami disaster, SBY’s own hesitant and nuanced leadership style soon became all the more obvious in contrast with the ‘can do’ attitude of his deputy. Also his political ideas are only implicit and one has to take a very close look at his Democrat Party ‘to discover a vague notion of “religious nationalism” as the lodestar of his political compass’.<sup>58</sup> Indecisive and happy to preside rather than to govern, SBY’s preference for maintaining the status quo became all too evident in his first term in office.<sup>59</sup> And whereas SBY’s and his party’s landslide victory of 2009 can be considered a rare feat for a sitting president, he failed to capitalize on this expanded mandate. In 2014, with SBY no longer eligible for re-election, it became evident that the PD did not offer a real alternative to existing political parties and that, like Golkar, it had functioned primarily as a ‘catch-all’ electoral machine, geared towards securing the position of its de facto leader and his family.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, as SBY prepared to bow out, electoral support for PD dwindled in that year’s parliamentary elections.

However, the SBY years have been anything but uneventful. Tucked in between two years of national disasters, 2005 can be considered a watershed year. The Tsunami of Christmas 2004 was interpreted by some as a sign of divine wrath fed by the cynical view that the follies of *Reformasi* were nothing but the natural outcome of the faults of the New Order. Religious scholars even formulated a *teologi bencana alam* or ‘theology of natural catastrophe’.<sup>61</sup> Earthquakes, floods, forest fires,

ferry disasters and yet another tsunami in 2006 did little to relieve the country's fatalist mood.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, it was also the year of what looks like a lasting settlement of the Aceh question, which has roots that can be traced back to Dutch colonial times. Fast-tracked by the disaster relief efforts and helped by the devolution of powers from the central government to provincial authorities, international mediators were able to broker a deal and on 15 August a peace treaty was signed.

The year 2005 also saw the now notorious MUI Fatwa 7 rejecting pluralism, liberalism and secularism as un-Islamic. Drafted by the council's conservative elements led by Ma'ruf Amin (b.1943), it was evidently passed in order to pander to the Islamists.<sup>63</sup> Militant human rights defenders accuse the judiciary and government itself of caving in to these pressures. While it took the courts years to secure a conviction of alleged JI leader Abu Bakar Ba'aysir, the government was all too willing to consider very controversial anti-pornography laws and displayed an apparent tolerance towards polygamy following the much publicized second marriage of the charismatic preacher Aa Gym. Also Christian-Muslim tensions rose again after the execution in 2006 of three Christian farmers accused of fomenting religious strife in Poso.

[In this] polemical context, an alliance of 'pancasilaists' was formed against the 'syariatization' of minds and institutions. On 1 June 2006, Gunawan [*sic!*] Mohammad, founder of the weekly *Tempo*, and Rahman Tolleng, the former leader of the *Mahasiswa Indonesia* in Bandung, officially launched a petition against Islamic intolerance and demanding the return to Pancasila.<sup>64</sup>

The repercussions of this stand-off between proponents of the soft secularism enshrined in Indonesia's state doctrine and those who want to turn the country into an Islamic state affect the subjects discussed in the various chapters of this book. It contends that many of the issues which continue to preoccupy Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia today remain controversial, and therefore often unresolved, because of a lack of clarity, the absence of a sense of direction, and indecisiveness radiating from the political top which seems primarily concerned with its own survival and safeguarding its vested interests.

### *Political characteristics of post-Suharto Indonesia*

In summary then, the three periods into which Indonesia's political history since the mid-1990s can be divided also share a number of constants. First of all, continuing occurrences of political-religious vio-

lence—albeit on a declining scale since 2005. Secondly, the recurring threats to the country's territorial integrity posed by separatist activism and the erosion of central administrative control of the republican union through legal means, in the form of decentralization and the accompanying devolution of powers to provincial and local government bodies. Thirdly, a military struggling to redefine itself and settle into a new role after the formal abolition of its political privileges in 2004, but which nevertheless continues to exercise considerable influence, both as an institution and through the political ambitions of high-profile key figures. Fourthly, the resilience of the political and bureaucratic elites from the Old and New Order eras, especially in large urban centers, first and foremost the capital Jakarta.

This last point is evinced not only by the fact that it took as long as sixteen years after regime change before an individual with no connections to the former regimes managed to emerge as a viable candidate for the presidency. However, even then the chances of Joko Widodo (b.1961)—or Jokowi, as he is popularly known—securing the 2014 PDI-P nomination hinged on the personal blessing of Megawati Sukarnoputri (instead of endorsing her politically ambitious daughter). Notwithstanding his personal appeal, Jokowi's own political credentials are modest: based on no more than an unfinished term as governor of Jakarta, preceded by a similar position in the provincial Javanese city of Solo. In order to meet the challenge posed by his main rival, retired general Prabowo Subianto, Jokowi had to co-opt the experienced political operator and former Vice President Jusuf Kalla as his running mate, and secure the support of former General Wiranto's Hanura Party and the NU-affiliated PKB. Even then, the duo only narrowly defeated the tandem consisting of the former general and the business tycoon Aburizal Bakrie, which was backed by the powerful 'Red-White Coalition' (*Koalisi Merah-Putih*, KMP), consisting of Prabowo's Gerindra Party, Bakrie's Golkar and the Islamic PPP and PAN.<sup>65</sup> As of summer 2014, this coalition continues to dominate parliament and may seriously jeopardize the Jokowi-Kalla administration's ability to govern the country. So while Jokowi did indeed attain the highest office in the land, he finds himself wedged between well-connected and consummate politicians, businessmen and military figures, some of whom have been around since the 1980s and 1990s. Within his own camp, they include Megawati Sukarnoputri and her family, Jusuf Kalla, Surya Paloh and former General Wiranto; and on

the opposition side, Prabowo Subianto, Aburizal Bakrie and Amien Rais.<sup>66</sup> At the time of writing, their persisting influence was further reflected in the composition of the Jokowi–Kalla cabinet, which included more political party stalwarts than anticipated, leading to disappointed commentaries in the press and from academic observers.<sup>67</sup>

*The ‘Islam factor’ in Indonesian politics*

Also to contend with after the fourth round of national elections are the Islamic parties, especially PPP, PAN and PKB, which hold the swing vote, enabling them to exercise considerable political influence in the balancing acts between the two opposing ‘nationalist’ party blocs. In this way, Islamic parties are part of the big factor acting as a counterweight to the dominance of the eternal political elites: the democratization of Indonesian society through the use of unprecedented freedom of expression and vibrant civil society activism supported by a wide variety of NGOs.<sup>68</sup> While contributions by Muslim intellectuals and activists to shaping such initiatives will form the primary concern of this book, by way of further contextualization our political assessment will end with an account of Islamic political activism in post-Suharto Indonesia.

One of its most noticeable elements has been the constant erosion of voter support for Islamist and other Muslim parties in the course of the three elections held between 1999 and 2009, followed by a sudden bounce-back occurring in 2014 in the performances of the NU-affiliated PKB and Muhammadiyah-oriented PAN. A detailed explanation of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this investigation, but we will refer to experienced observers of the interaction between religion and politics in Indonesia, such as Bob Hefner, Andrée Feillard and François Raillon, as well as a younger generation of scholars interested in political Islam in Indonesia, including Markus Mietzner, Bernhard Platzdasch and Masdar Hilmi; while each of them addresses and highlights different aspects of Islam’s role in Indonesian politics, all agree that the Muslim side of Indonesia’s political arena is characterized by division and fragmentation, which has impacted negatively on securing electoral support.

Mietzner’s comprehensive analysis of the interaction between civilian and military politics looks at the whole spectrum of Muslim political activism and explains how Muslim divisiveness has been affecting

the efficacy of civilian politics in controlling and countering the political ambitions of the armed forces and leading military figures. Meanwhile Platzdasch concentrates on the three Islamist parties, PPP, PBB and PKS, and surveys the differences between them in terms of political agendas and the internal divisions that plague all three parties individually. His overall conclusion is that their clamours for political influence, pragmatism and opportunist calculation have prevailed over ideological consistency and doctrinal authenticity. Hilmi denotes those Islamists who have opted for working within the existing political system to achieve their goals as 'meliorist' Islamists, looking in particular at the workings of PBB and PKS. They are contrasted with 'utopian' Islamists who have decided to stay out of party politics and the electoral process altogether and aim to influence Indonesian society in different ways. These include partisans of the *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI), the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*, MMI) and FKASWJ (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunna Wa Jamaah*).<sup>69</sup> The latter two have also established paramilitary wings, which—together with the FPI—are responsible for much of the religious-inspired intimidation and violence in Indonesia since the turn of the century. Various scholars have pointed to the ambiguous relationship of elements within the armed forces with FPI and Laskar Jihad, especially between 1998 and 2002, interpreting it as a mixture of manipulation and support for the purpose of undermining both Presidents B. J. Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid and other pro-democracy reformists, in order to protect the military's own vested political interests.<sup>70</sup> Only after the Bali bombings did a change of heart become detectable, as FPI and Laskar Jihad find themselves in a suspect position not dissimilar to that of MMI and its Laskar Mujahidin, which have always had an 'antagonistic relationship with Indonesia's armed forces and political establishment'.<sup>71</sup>

By the time the Indonesian republic achieved sixty years, the tensions between the advocates of undiluted Islamism and proponents of alternative forms of Muslim activism came to a head with the release of the earlier mentioned MUI fatwa against pluralism, liberalism and secularism in the summer of 2005. With this act, the highest Islamic body in the land in effect rejected the core ideas underlying the five principles of Pancasila. Consequently, in June 2006, Muslim and non-Muslim civil rights activists banded together on the occasion of Pancasila Day, using the occasion to proclaim a *Maklumat Keindonesiaan* or 'Decla-



ration of Indonesianness'.<sup>72</sup> This makes the year that passed between the summers of 2005 and 2006 a calibration point for political polarization within Indonesia's fragmented Muslim community.

*The intellectual–historical context*

Parallel to these extraordinary political developments, since the turn of the century Indonesia's Muslim intellectual landscape has undergone dramatic changes too. The contours of this transformation had already become discernible in the 1980s and 1990s, when the influence of a number of freethinking Muslim intellectuals reached unprecedented heights as Suharto began looking for new political allies. Their detractors meanwhile tried to compete by developing their own networks, in particular on the campuses of secular universities. In the tumultuous political climate following the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, a wide array of Islamic movements and political parties with varying agendas emerged as well. In particular the more exclusivist and intolerant manifestations of this phenomenon, embodied by organizations such as FPI, Laskar Jihad and Jemaah Islamiyah, have already received ample scholarly attention. This is much less the case with the intellectual exponents of a different kind of Islamic activism who often find themselves cornered by challenges from puritanical and reactionary Muslims in the increasingly polarized atmosphere of Indonesia today. This book intends to tell their story.

One of the key challenges in writing a book about contentious terms and concepts is finding an appropriate and acceptable alternative terminology, as well as suitable accompanying categories for those who articulate these ideas. In the literature on contemporary Islam one finds a wide array of designations used to refer to various discursive formations, underlying strands of thought and ideologies, and interlocutors. The protagonists have been characterized—or refer to themselves—as liberal, moderate and progressive Muslims, while, over time, their intellectual and political opponents have been called Islamic or Muslim fundamentalists, radicals, extremists, Salafis, Wahhabis, Islamists and Jihadis. I have struggled with this and I am not sure I have found a satisfying solution. However, I believe that the intellectuals who are at the center of this book can be referred to as progressive Muslims, while their opponents at the other end of the spectrum can be described as presenting or taking up conservative and reactionary positions.

In the descriptive parts of this book's narrative, there are instances where such consistency has to be sacrificed for the sake of fidelity to the accounts that are being analyzed; either on grounds of the particular theme that is being discussed or (self-) references used in the literature that was consulted in researching the various subjects. While this may be confusing and even annoying, it is hoped that this irritation will turn into a heightened awareness and appreciation for the complexity and multi-layeredness of present-day Islamic thinking and activism, not just in Indonesia but throughout the Muslim world.

Critics may argue that this progressive discourse is peripheral and of marginal significance, because it only addresses—and appeals to—those echelons of Muslim society with access to higher education. However, as I have persistently argued on earlier occasions, current demographic developments demonstrate that, throughout the Muslim world, urban middle classes have grown exponentially. That trend will continue in the decades to come, both in terms of its proportion of the total population and in absolute numbers, resulting in a massive expansion of the student body and of the tertiary education sector.<sup>73</sup> These are not merely the consumers and producers of this particular discourse, they also draw inspiration from it to act as agents of change, as demonstrated by student involvement in Indonesia's 1998 *Reformasi* and more recently—and more dramatically—the instances of regime change in other Muslim countries since the Arab revolts beginning in late 2010. Moreover, the importance of trans-regional and even global cross-pollination resulting from the circulation of such narratives throughout the Muslim world has stimulated a growing assertiveness in young Muslim intellectuals from Indonesia, who seem increasingly convinced and confident that they have something to share with co-religionists and with non-Muslims elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> This is also reflected in the new tendency to publish in English, whereas their peers from preceding generations generally confined themselves to writing in Indonesian for a home audience.<sup>75</sup>

### *The formative years of progressive Muslim discourse in Indonesia*

For the purposes of further discussion of the themes covered in this book, I distinguish four defining moments in the recent intellectual history of Muslim Indonesia which have conditioned their development during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Together they form

the trajectory along which evolved what has been called ‘cultural’, ‘civil’ and ‘cosmopolitan Islam’ by both Indonesian Muslims and researchers of Indonesian Islam.<sup>76</sup>

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the military regime of General Suharto continued to exercise a strict surveillance over political activism. As part of this, it also refused to lift the ban on either the country’s main modernist Islamic party Masyumi or the traditionalist NU, which had been supportive of Sukarno during the first twenty years of the republic. However, the New Order did open up a space for a depoliticized and non-partisan Islam to admit a Muslim intelligentsia who could play a role in the new government’s political strategy. This policy was geared towards pragmatic economic development, rather than the ideological posturing of the Sukarno era. The key intellectuals plotting this new course were student leader Nurcholish Madjid, the initiator of the so-called *Gerakan Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam* or ‘Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking’, and his intellectual mentors: the academic Harun Nasution (1919–98) and his colleague Abdul Mukti Ali (1923–2004) of the State Islamic Institute (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, IAIN), Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta and IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta respectively.<sup>77</sup> Together they laid the foundations for a new engagement with the Islamic tradition called *Islam Substantif* (also somewhat inelegantly referred to as *pemikiran substantivistik* or *substantialisistik*, substantivistic or substantialistic thinking)—a reinterpretation focussing on the substance of Islamic teachings rather than its formal aspects.<sup>78</sup> It also points to another important change in the state’s attitude towards Muslims: shifting its reliance from the NU and Muhammadiyah to independent intellectuals and bureaucrats. As a consequence the influential post of minister of religious affairs, which had traditionally been reserved for representatives of either one of these movements, was now given to academics and government officials.<sup>79</sup> Paralleling this trend, the independent modernist Muslim Students Association HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*) also outmaneuvered its NU- and Muhammadiyah-affiliated counterparts.<sup>80</sup>

When Mukti Ali became Minister of Religious Affairs in 1971, he proposed a radical overhaul of the Indonesian Islamic education system in order to improve the preparation of future generations of Muslim intellectuals and technocrats for a role in the country’s economic development.<sup>81</sup> After Nasution had been appointed rector of Jakarta’s IAIN, Mukti Ali put him in charge of redesigning the curric-

ulum of the entire tertiary Islamic education system. Both these academic administrators had received their higher education abroad: Mukti Ali in Pakistan and under Wilfred Cantwell Smith at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Canada, while Nasution studied in Saudi Arabia and Egypt before also embarking on postgraduate studies at McGill. Now they had an opportunity to use their new positions of influence to pass on their experiences to future generations of Indonesian Muslim academics and intellectuals.

In his new blueprint, Nasution stressed the importance of critical reflection on Islam's religious and wider civilizational heritage, underscoring the need to distinguish between normative Islam and the religion's contingent historical development. He introduced teaching about 'heretical' sects and controversial philosophical schools, such as the ninth-century rationalist Mu'tazila, while also adding writings by Western scholars of Islam to the student reading lists.<sup>82</sup> The new policy met with positive responses from progressive figures in both the traditionalist NU and modernist Muhammadiyah, inspiring the reform of the Islamic boarding school or *pesantren* education system through the efforts of Abdurrahman Wahid and M. Dawam Rahardjo.<sup>83</sup> The 'new Santri study circles', or *halqah*, emerging in this reformed *pesantren* milieu would become the seedbed in which the third generation of postcolonial Muslim intellectuals were nurtured educationally, before moving on to institutions of higher learning.<sup>84</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, a younger Muslim intellectual, Yudi Latif, assesses the impact of the 'carrot' offered by the New Order as a mixed blessing, or at best an ambiguous benefit, because job prospects for those graduating from these religious institutions were limited as their main potential employer, the behemoth Ministry of Religious Affairs, could not absorb them all.<sup>85</sup>

Meanwhile, Nurcholish Madjid, an exponent of what I call the first generation of postcolonial or post-independence Muslim intellectuals, had launched a movement for a radical renewal of Islamic thinking under the provocative slogan 'Islam Yes! Islamic Party No!' He argued that an Islamic worldview was neither incompatible with a secular polity nor with rational epistemologies.<sup>86</sup> Upon his return from postgraduate studies with Fazlur Rahman in Chicago, Madjid reformulated his earlier *pembaruan* or renewal thinking into what this mentor referred to as 'Islamic Neo-Modernism'.<sup>87</sup> Two other graduates from the University of Chicago—Amien Rais and Syafii Maarif—also contrib-

uted significantly to changing the way in which Islamic modernism was understood and practised in Indonesia when they became Muhammadiyah leaders in the 1990s.

Together with a reconfigured education system catering to Indonesia's Muslims, such adventurous intellectual pursuits laid the basis for influencing the thought of a new middle class of educated and increasingly well-heeled and upwardly-mobile Muslim urbanites. In the course of this process, with traditional religious scholars or *ulama* also obtaining university degrees, the distinctions between them and supposedly secular intellectuals became increasingly blurred. According to one observer, this fusion was accommodated by adopting the Indonesianized Sanskrit term for intellectuals: *cendekiawan*.<sup>88</sup>

The second key moment, built on this foundation, was the introduction of the so-called *Reaktualisasi Agenda*, or 'Re-actualization Agenda', through which the government began to coordinate initiatives in support of this increasingly assertive Muslim middle class and the concomitant Islamization of Indonesian society they were bringing about. This program was introduced and implemented between 1983 and 1993 under the direction of the then Minister of Religious Affairs, Munawir Sjadzali (1925–2004). His campaign was greatly helped by the financial windfall that oil-rich Indonesia experienced in the wake of the petro-boom of the 1970s and 1980s. As part of the new policy, the domestic Islamic higher education system was expanded into a network of more than a dozen campuses, while large numbers of talented academics were sent overseas for postgraduate studies in North America, Western Europe, Australia, as well as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey.<sup>89</sup> Coinciding with the introduction of this Reactualization Agenda was the NU's decision, after its earlier parliamentary walk-out in 1978, to withdraw entirely from party politics and refocus on its original core activities: emancipating Indonesia's Muslims through education and grassroots-level social work. This reorientation was presented under the slogan *Kembali ke Khittah 1926* or 'Return to the 1926 Founding Document' (of the NU).<sup>90</sup> This resolution was in part motivated by the continuing sense of frustration about the Muslim community's political prospects, as the New Order's repressive developmentalism drove it to manipulate the only condoned Islamic party, PPP, for its own purposes.<sup>91</sup>

In spite of trying to act as a counter-force, the New Order was fighting a lost cause. Eventually, Indonesia's Islamization process—known in

Indonesian as *Penghijauan*, or ‘Greening’, after the symbolic color of Islam—even reached the upper echelons of Indonesian society, epitomized by President Suharto’s pilgrimage to Mecca in 1991. These are also the years of a further opening-up (*keterbukaan*) of Indonesia’s public domain to Islamic intellectualism, of which the earlier mentioned establishment of ICMI can be considered the most emblematic manifestation. That is why the fall of the New Order regime in 1998–9 represents the third key moment. In the initially chaotic aftermath of the post-Suharto *Reformasi* era, which accompanied the drastic transformation of Indonesia’s political and intellectual scenes, a third postcolonial generation of Muslim academics, writers and activists began to respond to the ideas and politics of their predecessors. Mirroring developments in the political domain, tensions in the intellectual sphere also came to a head in the year 2005–6, which I consider the fourth and—at least for the present account—final key moment. As progressive intellectualism continued to widen in terms of numerical participation, so did the polarization between its viewpoints and those of the other side of the Muslim spectrum. Navigating between these extremes, the mainstream of established Muslim mass organizations such as the Muhammadiyah and the NU both made an observable ‘conservative turn’.<sup>92</sup>

The impact of these two final moments on the development of intellectual Islamic discourse at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and documenting and analyzing the concerns of Indonesia’s progressive Muslims, will be the main subject of this book. The five themes identified by Dawam Rahardjo in 1989 as central points of attention for Islamic renewal thinking in Indonesia continue to preoccupy these Muslim intellectuals today: the reinterpretation of the Qur’an; the ‘actualization’ of tradition; the Islamization of knowledge and technology; the indigenization of Islam; and an orientation towards the future. These all remain relevant to ways in which Indonesian Muslims engage their religion for what is a contest for society, ideas and values.<sup>93</sup> It will become clear that while the country’s progressive Muslims engage the Islamic heritage or *turath* in a different manner from their conservative and reactionary counterparts, thus reaching different conclusions and therefore setting different agendas for action, the responses of both the protagonists of this book and their antagonists must be seen as reactions to the disappointing political developments of the post-Suharto era.

## ISLAM IN INDONESIA TODAY

### DISCOURSES AND INTERLOCUTORS

As the sclerotic New Order regime was replaced by the energetic optimism and great expectations of *Reformasi*, at the turn of the twenty-first century, Indonesia also witnessed the emergence of new, increasingly critical and more sophisticated ways of thinking about Islam in terms of the religion's relevance to public life and its place in society, its significance for the spiritual wellbeing of the believers, as well as Islam as an analytical body of belief. These strands of thought, bringing together various strains of innovative ideas, were initiated and developed by intellectuals who defy neat pigeonholing into existing categories. For example, many of the intellectuals contributing to these discursive formations come from traditionalist Muslim backgrounds, received their education at *pesantren*, and continue to maintain links with the NU. And yet, at first glance, their ideas and views appear to suggest that they have overtaken their modernist counterparts in critical and creative thinking. On closer inspection, however, it seems more accurate to speak of a meeting of minds between NU and Muhammadiyah activist-intellectuals of the second and third postcolonial generations. By mapping the intellectual landscape, profiling some of the key actors and surveying a number of outlets for new ideas, I intend to provide a setting for the confluence of various strands of progressive Muslim thinking unified by a desire to safeguard and secure secularism, liber-

alism and pluralism as the ruling principles of Indonesia's public sphere, in the face of Islamist antagonism.

*Mapping contemporary Muslim intellectualism in Indonesia*

When dealing with these self-proclaimed *santri baru* ('neo-' or 'new santris') it is no longer so easy to distinguish allegedly traditionalist Muslim intellectuals from their so-called modernist counterparts.<sup>1</sup> At the end of twentieth century, these lines were becoming increasingly blurred and the automatic association of Islamic traditionalism with conservative outlooks and modernist Muslims with progressive attitudes was no longer valid. Some new manifestations of Muslim intellectualism decisively cut through this divide. These included informal clusters of scholars associated with the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta and Yogyakarta's IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, which became known as the *Mazhab Ciputat* or 'Ciputat School' and the *Mazhab Jogja* or 'Jogja School' (also known as *Mazhab Sapen*) respectively.<sup>2</sup> These names derived from the location of their campuses, while the designation *mazhab* (sometimes also spelled *madzhab*) is the Indonesian rendition of the Arabic term *madhhab*, originally used to refer to traditional Islamic schools of law.<sup>3</sup> Without structural or institutional form, let alone official membership administration, both the *Mazhab Ciputat* and the *Mazhab Jogja* included students and academics from NU or Muhammadiyah backgrounds, as well as individuals without such associations. In the increasingly antagonistic intra-Muslim atmosphere of recent years, both have become the target of criticism from reactionary Muslims in publications such as *Apostasy at the IAIN*.<sup>4</sup>

Only loosely linked to academia, but certainly one of the most high-profile exponents of this rapprochement between traditionalists and modernists was the Liberal Islam Network (*Jaringan Islam Liberal*, JIL).<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to avoid controversial and potentially misleading terms such as 'liberal Islam' or 'Islamic liberalism', some observers and intellectuals proposed alternative and possibly more comprehensive or inclusive descriptions.<sup>6</sup> In 2004, two Indonesian graduates from al-Azhar University in Cairo, Zuhairi Misrawi and Novriantoni Kahar, published *The Doctrine of Progressive Islam*, while—six years later—Budhy Munawar-Rachman used the term 'progressive Muslim intellectuals' to transcend the traditionalist-modernist dichotomy in his



description of the opponents of the 2005 MUI fatwa.<sup>7</sup> Although ‘progressive’ is not a neutral term either, it is probably less loaded with preconceived meanings and connotations than other designations mentioned at the beginning of this book, such as moderate and liberal, puritanical and radical Islam.<sup>8</sup> Even as the distinctions between the supposedly neater and less contentious categories of traditionalist and modernist Muslims are becoming increasingly opaque, it cannot be denied that institutions like the NU and Muhammadiyah are alive and well, and that identification and association with these two leading Muslim mass organizations remains very common among Muslim intellectuals. However, even a cursory glance at new designations that have come into use within these respective organizations betrays a subtle plurality of viewpoints, positions and interests.

Among adherents to the traditionalist NU, observers have identified the subcategory of ‘new *ulama*’, while we also find self-references such as ‘young NU cadres’ (*anak/kaum muda NU*) and ‘young NU intellectuals’ (*intelektual muda NU*). Others prefer to use the term *nahdliyyin* (‘reawakeners’) or see themselves as representing something they call ‘Islamic post-traditionalism’.<sup>9</sup> The Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (*Jaringan Intelektual Muhammadiyah Muda*, JIMM), formed in 2003, appears to be the closest modernist equivalent to these *anak* or *kaum muda NU*.<sup>10</sup> Students of modernist Islam in Indonesia identify a number of different doctrinal and ideological blocs within the Muhammadiyah. First of all, there is the puritan mainstream, called the ‘Dahlan Group’ after the organization’s founder Ahmad Dahlan (1868–1923). On their right, one finds the reactionary *Ikhlas* bloc, which actively combats what they regard as practices deviating from their stringent interpretation of what constitutes in their view ‘pure’ and ‘true Islam’; in Islamic idiom such deviations are referred to as *takhayul*, *bid’a* and *churafat* and tendentiously abbreviated to ‘TBC’. On the other side of the spectrum, we find a leftist strand strongly influenced by social and political theories, which the literature refers to as the ‘marginalized or proletarian Muhammadiyah’ (*Marhaenis-Muhammadiyah* or *Marmuh* for short).<sup>11</sup> A nationalist bloc called *Munas* (*Muhammadiyah Nasionalis*) maintains political ties with Megawati Sukarnoputri’s PDI-P. Finally, and indicative of the narrowing gap between certain Muslim modernists and traditionalists, is the presence of a group of Muhammadiyah activists from NU backgrounds referred to as *Munu* (*Muhammadiyah-NU*).<sup>12</sup>

If anything, this indicates that mass organizations such as the Muhammadiyah and NU are not monolithic bodies. On the contrary, they reflect the very diversity of Indonesian Muslim society and mirror its moods.<sup>13</sup> In relation to this last point, it must also be noted that, in the face of the increasing antagonism between different groups of Muslims and the growing polarization of the intra-Muslim debates, in the course of the last decade the progressive trends of the preceding twenty-five years appear to be giving way to a swing towards conservatism.<sup>14</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail later, as it is of recurring relevance to the various issues and themes addressed in the other chapters.

Although this book focuses on the substance of ideas presently circulating in Muslim intellectual circles, for a more accurate mapping of these discourses it is still useful to address the institutional or organizational settings in which new ideas are conceived, as well as how they are disseminated. Aside from the earlier mentioned instances of informal clustering of scholars at universities and the amorphous networking among activists, there is an array of NGOs, research institutes and think tanks which form the seedbeds for ideas developed by second- and third-generation postcolonial intellectuals.

The first group of such organizations were established in the wake of Nurcholish Madjid's Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking (*Gerakan Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam*) of the early 1970s, but they really began to proliferate during the years of the 'Reactualization Agenda' (1983–93) and again in the early 2000s. Probably the most renowned think tank—certainly in terms of access to the country's political elites—is the Paramadina Foundation (*Yayasan Paramadina*) which was established in 1986 by Nurcholish Madjid himself.<sup>15</sup> In spite of losing much of its lustre after the founder's demise in 2005, together with Paramadina University the foundation remains an important interlocutor in contemporary Indonesian Muslim discourses and continues to appeal to younger generations of Muslim intellectuals, reaching out through, for example, its *Forum Muda Paramadina* (or Paramadina Youth Forum). Another central figure in establishing and managing some of these research institutes and NGOs is M. Dawam Rahardjo, probably the most influential Muslim intellectual in the field of social sciences. He has also been important in creating a nexus between education and NGOs for the purpose of grassroots-level development initiatives. As early as 1971, Rahardjo helped establish

and run the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (*Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial*, LP3ES). In spite of Rahardjo's association with the Muhammadiyah, LP3ES became a key participant in *pesantren* reform and the training of a new generation of religious teachers (*kyai*) and cadres.<sup>16</sup> In 1987, Rahardjo became the founding director of the Institute for the Study of Religion and Philosophy (*Lembaga Studi Agama dan Falsafat*, LSAF). He has also been involved with the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies (*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial*, LKiS) since its inception in 1992. Many observers of Islam in present-day Indonesia confirm the central importance of LKiS in the development of contemporary Muslim intellectualism, not just as a research center, but also because of its active involvement in the publishing business, especially translations of foreign scholarship in the study of Islam and the writings of progressive Muslim intellectuals from elsewhere.<sup>17</sup>

Other important NGOs playing a prominent role in developing innovative Muslim thinking and finding practical applications for these ideas are either direct offshoots or affiliations of the NU. Among these, one of the earliest and most influential is the Society for Educational and Community Development (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat* or P3M). An initiative dating back to 1983, it was set up to support further implementation of the *pesantren* reforms started in the 1970s. P3M became increasingly important following the NU's redirection of its activities towards education and grassroots-level work after its 1984 general congress.<sup>18</sup> Other NGOs include the Jakarta-based Institute for the Research and Development of Human Resources (*Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia*, Lakpesdam), which was established in 1985, and its Yogyakarta counterpart the Institute for Pesantren and Human Resources Research (*Lembaga Kajian Pesantren dan Sumber Daya Manusia*, LKPSM) founded a year later.<sup>19</sup> Together with the Cirebon-based Fahmina Institute (1999), they all function as the incubators for new generations of NU intellectuals.<sup>20</sup>

The early 2000s saw a further proliferation of NGOs and think tanks concerned with developing and promoting contemporary Islamic thinking, including initiatives evidently intended to preserve the intellectual heritage of Muslim intellectuals and public figures of the older generation. Among these are the Freedom Institute (2001), the Indonesia

Institute (2002), the now defunct Reform Institute (2003), and the *Pusat Studi Islam dan Kenegaraan* (PSIK) or Center for Islam and State Studies (2005), all of which—in one form or another—are involved in perpetuating the strand of innovative Islamic thinking started by Nurcholish Madjid in the 1970s.<sup>21</sup> Although not directly linked to Nurcholish Madjid's movement, but representing an agenda of tolerance with a particular focus on protecting freedom of religion, is the International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP). It is led by the former journalist M. Syafii Anwar (b.1953), who previously worked as Rahardjo's deputy at LSAF and was also involved in establishing ICMI.<sup>22</sup> Supporters of former Muhammadiyah chairman Ahmad Syafii Maarif and of the late Abdurrahman Wahid have founded the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity (2003) and the Wahid Institute (2004) respectively.<sup>23</sup> Even the last President of the New Order, B. J. Habibie, has joined this chorus by establishing the eponymous Habibie Center.<sup>24</sup> Many of these institutes and NGOs have entered into mutual partnerships, creating interlocking webs of networks to coordinate their activities.

Having such a conducive institutional environment that nourishes innovative, creative and critical thinking is one thing, but what are also needed are forums and vehicles to present and disseminate the resulting outputs. The awareness of the importance of media among Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia is evinced by a thriving Islamic publishing industry and, with the more recent revolution in information technology, the emergence of an equally vibrant use of cyberspace. Muslims in Indonesia show a voracious appetite for books and now also for blogs and other internet forums. They appear to be intellectual omnivores, whose interests are not limited to things Islamic, but extend into Western philosophy, political theory and the wider fields of the humanities and social sciences.<sup>25</sup>

As a result, the institutions of higher Islamic education, research institutes, think tanks, and NGOs are also very much engaged in the production and publication of books, scholarly journals and other periodicals. Two prominent academic outlets are *Studia Islamika* and *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, which were started by intellectuals associated with the State Islamic Institutes in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.<sup>26</sup> The Paramadina Foundation publishes the eponymous journal *Paramadina*. Another influential periodical is *Prisma*, which has been published for decades by LP3ES. Syafii Anwar's ICIP pro-

duces the periodical *Al-Wasathiyyah*. Anwar was also involved in LSAF's journal of Qur'anic Studies, *Ulumul Qur'an*, eventually taking over as general editor from Dawam Rahardjo. After an interruption of several years, the journal was relaunched in 2012 on the occasion of Dawam Rahardjo's seventieth birthday.<sup>27</sup> The more recently established *Tashwirul Afkar: Jurnal Refleksi Pemikiran Keagamaan & Kebudayaan* (1997) is the organ of Lakpesdam, providing a stepping stone for the careers of young NU cadres, and becoming the flagship of Islamic post-traditionalism.

### *Profiling the protagonists*

If there is a unifying hallmark characterizing these present-day Muslim intellectuals, then it would be a feature they share with certain senior figures from the preceding generation, such as Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, who managed to straddle the traditionalist-modernist Islamic divide or—more accurately—who distinguished themselves by their ability to work in the interstices between different strands of Islamic thinking. By way of theoretical framing, in *Cosmopolitans and Heretics* I have used concepts such as cultural hybridity, liminality and even marginality in order to capture this *modus operandi*. In order to clarify how such notions fit within this particular context, it is instructive to return briefly to these first-generation post-colonial intellectuals, also because they have mentored intellectuals from subsequent generations. Instead of trying to abstract some common denominator, it is more illustrative to offer a sublimation by sketching the profiles of a few influential figures.<sup>28</sup>

In my previous book, I have already presented the mixed cultural-religious background of Nurcholish Madjid (Cak Nur) and his unconventional educational choices as defining elements in his early outlook on the role of religion in contemporary Indonesian society, which stimulated him to take the initiative of founding the renewal or *Pembaruan* Movement.<sup>29</sup> It was during his subsequent postgraduate studies at the University of Chicago under Fazlur Rahman, where he was introduced to the work of the historian of Islam Marshall Hodgson, that he developed a greater appreciation for the wider Islamic tradition or *turath* (heritage). It was because of these experiences that he began subscribing to the adage 'retaining from the old what is good, taking from the new what is better', which encapsulates the essence of his later thought, conventionally referred to as 'Islamic neo-modernism'.<sup>30</sup>

However, such hybridity is not confined to independent individuals of mixed traditionalist–modernist milieus such as Nurcholish Madjid, but also found among key figures who have transformed the NU from a conservative traditionalist mass organization into a moderately progressive force, and also among left-leaning Islamic modernists within the Muhammadiyah. Unlike his friend Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid (affectionately known as Gus Dur) does not match the profile of the ‘professionalized intellectual’ described by Bruce Robbins, but remains closer to that of the ‘Luftmensch’. His intellectual idiosyncrasies are very much shaped by his unconventional formative years. Born in the same East Javanese district of Jombang as Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid was an indisputable blue-blooded *santri* of the NU aristocracy. His evident intelligence suggested that he would rise to scholarly prominence and have a stellar career in the NU. However, his inquisitive but undisciplined mind initially took him in a very different intellectual direction, away from the stereotypical *ulama* trajectory: Abdurrahman Wahid was sent to Cairo, but became quickly bored with the curriculum at the famous Islamic Al-Azhar University, so he enrolled at the secular University of Cairo instead to study Arabic literature, a subject he later continued to pursue in Baghdad. However, most of his time was spent in libraries reading world literature and watching films in cinemas.

Returning to Indonesia without the required formal qualifications or degrees, he became a writer, educator and enthusiastic supporter of *pesantren* reform. However, given his background it was unavoidable that he would also become involved in NU affairs. When this happened, he quickly rose through the ranks until he was elected general chairman of the NU’s executive council in 1984. He used this a position from which to direct and oversee the organization’s return to the *Khittah* 1926. The NU also provided him with a platform from which to rise to become an important figurehead of the opposition against Suharto’s New Order regime. In spite of the president’s overtures to the Muslim bloc from the early 1990s onwards, Abdurrahman Wahid continued to demonstrate his independence by remaining one of the few leading Muslim intellectuals who refused to join ICMI. This conscious self-marginalization from government-controlled organizations and discourses would prove a wise move of strategic foresight. However, it led to internal criticism from various quarters within the NU: politicians accused him of squandering a golden opportunity to

mend fences with the regime; conservative *ulama* challenged Wahid's liberal postions; and a younger generation of leaders criticized his soloist style and lack of management skill. But it was this very liminality that placed Abdurrahman Wahid in the right position from which to transform the NU and exercise real political influence, which eventually enabled him to claim the highest office in the land.<sup>31</sup>

Under Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU was turned into a more outward looking and socially engaged movement, capable of accommodating other mavericks. For example, what to make of an individual like Achmad Mustofa Bisri (b.1944)? By all appearances, 'Gus Mus' is a closer match to the image of an '*alim* than Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>32</sup> Also a descendant from a long line of *ulama*, Bisri did graduate from Al-Azhar and continues to head an important *pesantren* in Rembang, Central Java. Since 1994, he has been a vice chairman of the NU central board. In addition to this, he has also made a name as a poet, painter and staunch defender of both religious and artistic freedom, appreciated by traditionalist and modernist Muslims alike.<sup>33</sup> In 2007, Gus Mus became caught up in a scandal, because of a painting entitled *Berdzikir bersama Inul* ('Performing *Dhikr* with Inul'), which portrays an erotic female dancer performing in the midst of a circle of religious scholars.<sup>34</sup> Gus Mus not only painted the picture, but put it on display in his mosque in support of Inul Daratista, a famous pop star associated with a risqué music and dance style known as *Dangdut*, which had been condemned by conservative religious leaders as lewd, immoral and therefore un-Islamic.<sup>35</sup> Gus Mus felt vindicated in his provocative action, because in the ensuing debates Abdurrahman Wahid also spoke out in favor of artistic freedom over religious propriety.

Intellectuals from Muhammadiyah backgrounds also have not been immune to cultural hybridization. Although for decades it was known as a modernist Muslim mass organization dedicated to the purification of Indonesian Islam from undesirable cultural accretions, its last three chairmen were all US-educated scholars who presided over increasingly animated debates between puritans, reactionaries and progressives challenging bourgeois influences, and new members from traditionalist backgrounds. This created a space for rather unconventional intellectuals to disseminate new ways of thinking about Muslim engagement with the question of modernity and, perhaps increasingly more relevant, postmodernity.

These include figures such as the earlier mentioned M. Dawam Rahardjo. Born in Yogyakarta as the son of a leading figure in the

Muhammadiyah and an economist by training, his involvement in hands-on development work has not hindered his intellectual creativity. Blessed with a tremendous work ethic, Rahardjo has also been a productive writer on topics straddling the fields of economics, politics and culture, including literature and religion; his irrepressible intellectual curiosity made him even venture into the field of Qur'anic studies, on which he founded his journal. Influenced by the philosophies of Hegel and Marx, as well as the writings of Muslim writers like Muhammad Iqbal and Ali Shari'ati, he uses Marxism and Dependency Theory as tools for analyzing the social and political conditions of Indonesian Muslims, but without necessarily fully subscribing to the ideological implications. Avoiding utopian–normative thinking because of its illusive and artificial determinism, he also rejects Parsonian functionalism, opting instead for a historical–structural approach. According to one commentator, this sets Dawam Rahardjo apart from Nurcholish Madjid: although appreciative of the latter's contributions to the renewal of Islamic thinking in Indonesia, Rahardjo has also been critical of Madjid's interpretation of modernity.<sup>36</sup>

A comparable defining contribution to thinking about Islam and modernity was made by the scholar and man of letters Kuntowijoyo (1943–2005). Born into a very traditional Javanese family (his father was a *dalang* or shadow-play puppeteer, while a great-grandfather had made a living as a copyist of Qur'an manuscripts), during his student years Kuntowijoyo developed a keen interest in both modern Indonesian and world literature. As a history student at Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University, he was involved in a number of cultural initiatives. Even though his postgraduate studies at Connecticut and Columbia University dealt with social and economic history, he still found time to write novels and poetry. These creative proclivities carried over into his academic writings, leading to the formulation of what he calls a 'Prophetic Social Science'. First introduced in *The Paradigm of Islam*, it was elaborated in another essay collection with the intriguing title *Muslim with Mosque*.<sup>37</sup> In increasing poor health since 1991, his writing gained a frantic pace until his death in 2005.

For the last ten years or so, the work of Moeslim Abdurrahman (1948–2012) has been at least as important for introducing young Muhammadiyah intellectuals to alternative ways of thinking about Islam. Born into a pious Muslim family, Moeslim Abdurrahman spent time at a *pesantren*, and the resulting acquaintance with the 'store-



house of the classical Islamic tradition' sets him apart from many of his peers in the HMI and Muhammadiyah, who were generally raised on a staple diet of modernist Islamic thinking and secular social theories originating in the West.<sup>38</sup> After training as an anthropologist at the University of Illinois in Urbana, Moeslim Abdurrahman joined the Ministry of Religious Affairs, where he continued to work for twelve years. Dividing his time between Jakarta and Solo, he also taught part-time in the anthropology and political science program at Universitas Indonesia and the anthropology and philosophy department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. He was recruited by Syafii Maarif to help develop what came to be known as the Muhammadiyah's 'cultural *dakwah*' (*dakwah kultural*), eventually leading to his appointment as the first executive director of the Maarif Institute in 2004. While Moeslim Abdurrahman's ideas about the cultural role of religion are closely linked to those of the historian Kuntowijoyo, the 'transformative social science' he developed in his book *Islam Transformatif* has a more solid social-scientific foundation than the latter's more literary-inclined writings.<sup>39</sup>

It may be tempting to dismiss the individuals presented so far as idiosyncratic intellectuals, as exceptions to the rule that Indonesia's Muslim community can be neatly divided along traditionalist and modernist lines. Even those observers who recognize that the first post-colonial generation of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals has moved beyond such dichotomies or binary oppositions still employ alternative categories derived from the same classical division, such as 'neo-modernism' or 'neo-traditionalism'.<sup>40</sup> Setting aside the Indonesian context and looking at it from a generic intellectual-historical perspective, such figures can also be interrogated as organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense, as Bruce Robbins' professionalized intellectuals, or possibly as something in between. They also put to the test the validity of Bauman's categories of gamekeepers-turned-gardeners, and whether intellectuals have given up their positions as legislators to become interpreters, or actually opted for the reverse. What I also want to stress is that by identifying marginality and hybridity as constituent elements in the profiles of contemporary Indonesian Muslim thinkers, it becomes possible to see the connection between the present account and postcolonial theory. The experiences of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals resonate with the so-called marginals in Edward Said's *Representations of the Intellectual* and with Homi Bhabha's notions of cultural hybridity

as occupying a 'Third Space' from which to exercise a meta-critique.<sup>41</sup> The desired plurality of terrains, multiple experiences and different constituencies also invokes Robbins' Comparative Cosmopolitanisms which regard 'cultures not as distinct, different wholes, but as mobile, fluid, hybrid, and inclusive'.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, the centrality of hybrid cultural identities, or finding oneself in the liminal or betwixt and between positions as a persistent feature of contemporary Islamic intellectuals in Indonesia, is also reflected in two collections of autobiographical essays written by second- and third-generation intellectuals at the beginning and end of the 1990s respectively. Together these two publications mark off a crucial decade in terms of newly emerging Islamic discourses in Indonesia, thus paralleling the change in the country's political landscape during the same time period from the establishment of ICMI to the collapse of the New Order regime. *Searching for Islam* (1990) was edited by Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (b.1965) of the Ciputat School and Haidar Bagir (b.1957), founder and owner of the leading Islamic publishing house Mizan. It contains contributions by former Paramadina staffers Yudi Latif (b.1964) and Budhy Munawar-Rachman (b.1963), as well as young scholars from IAIN Jakarta, such as Ali Munhanif (b.1965) and Saiful Muzani (Mujani, b.1962), in which they write about the personal experiences that brought them to promoting Islamic freethinking.<sup>43</sup> The title of the other volume, *Hybrid Culture: Young NU Cadres in the Culture Interstices*, released in 1999, even goes so far as to explicitly identify hybridity and interstitiality as crucial composite elements in the profiles of these upcoming Muslim intellectuals.<sup>44</sup>

### *Mazhab Ciputat: custodians of Nurcholish Madjid's intellectual legacy*

Since the 1980s, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta has been one of the most important seedbeds for creative Islamic thinking, acting as an incubator for successive generations of influential Muslim academics and other intellectuals. They were nurtured by rectors such as the late Harun Nasution and Quraish Shihab (b.1944), and by government support extended under the Minister of Religious Affairs Munawir Sjadzali's 'Reactualization Agenda'.<sup>45</sup>

In an interview with Ann Kull for her biography of Nurcholish Madjid, political scientist Fachry Ali (b.1954) claims he invented the

term *Mazhab Ciputat* or Ciputat School as early as 1980, when he was still a student. According to Fachry, it describes an intellectual community dedicated to the promotion and defense of the ideas of Nurcholish Madjid, adding the observation that it also marked ‘the birth of liberal Islam in Indonesia’.<sup>46</sup> Looking at some of the other members of the Ciputat School, it is clear that it has a very close association with Nurcholish Madjid and his ideas. However, to declare Nurcholish Madjid’s *Pembaruan* Movement, and his later Paramadina Foundation, as a form of liberal Islam needs some qualification and will be subjected to greater scrutiny when examining various critiques of liberal Islam in the next chapter.

Other senior figures of the *Mazhab Ciputat* include Azyumardi Azra and Komaruddin Hidayat (b.1953), who would both go on to serve as the university’s rectors.<sup>47</sup> They emulated mentors such as Harun Nasution, Mukti Ali, Nurcholish Madjid and Syafii Maarif by pursuing postgraduate studies abroad under the new scholarship schemes offered as part of the Reactualization Agenda. Azra obtained a PhD in history at New York’s Columbia University, while Hidayat went to Turkey and received a doctorate in philosophy from the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara with a thesis on Hobbes and Rousseau. Upon their return they had stellar careers as scholars and academic administrators. An expert on Southeast Asian Islamic history, Azra became a professor at his alma mater and has since also written very extensively on Islamic reformism, education, religion and politics in the contemporary Muslim world. In 1998 he was elected rector of the university, serving until 2006 when he was succeeded by Komaruddin Hidayat, and traded places with him as director of the postgraduate school.<sup>48</sup> Before returning to academia, Komaruddin Hidayat had served as executive director of the Paramadina Foundation, while also writing and editing a number of books on Islam, spirituality and perennial philosophy. He has been a professor of philosophy at UIN Jakarta since 2001, and has taught at Universitas Indonesia, the Jesuit-run Driyarkara Advanced School for Philosophy (*Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara*, STF Driyarkara) and the secular Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta. Reflecting his standing as a public intellectual, he was put in charge of the 2004 national elections monitoring committee, and has been approached for political office by the PPP. Hidayat is also acutely aware of the importance of communication, taking full advantage of his access to the opinion pages of national

newspapers and television, as well as social media such as Twitter.<sup>49</sup> In the summer of 2014, both Azyumardi Azra and Komaruddin Hidayat's names circulated as candidates for cabinet posts in the administration of newly elected President Joko Widodo.

The stories of Azra and Hidayat are illustrative of the cultural, religious and intellectual journeys made by second-generation postcolonial Muslim intellectuals. At the beginning of the *Reformasi* era they had reached the pinnacles of Indonesian academia and gained access to the corridors of state power. For the last fifteen years, Azra and Hidayat have used these positions to help shape Islamic discourse and try to influence government policy on religion, by continuing to promote the substantivist interpretations of Islam of their predecessors Nasution and Shihab. However, having moved from the anti-hegemonic fringes of Islamic intellectualism to becoming part of the dominant discourse, they are not immune from criticisms on the part of ensuing generations of Muslim intellectuals.

A slightly younger group of academics and activists, often with similar HMI backgrounds as Nurcholish Madjid, made their way into the Ciputat School proper via the Forum of Ciputat Students (*Forum Mahasiswa Ciputat*, FORMACI).<sup>50</sup> They belong to the '1980s generation' (*Angkatan 80-an*), the first to benefit as a whole from more generous access opportunities to Islamic secondary and higher education. Since their student days, many remain associated with Nurcholish Madjid's intellectual and institutional legacy, joining the Paramadina Foundation, teaching at Paramadina University or IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah—in some instances working for two or even all three institutions. Key figures of this group contributed to the 1990 volume of autobiographical essays, *Searching for Islam*, which offer an intimate insight into often conflicting experiences of hybridity and marginality during their childhood and youth. Situating the collection in the broader genre of autobiography, editors Haidar Baqir and Ihsan Ali-Fauzi asked for written self-portraits and critical engagement with cultural strategies employed by these budding intellectuals and their predecessors to accommodate their Muslim and Indonesian identities. In the introduction, the editors suggest combining features of confessionals, such as Augustine's *Confessions* and al-Ghazali's *Munqidh min al-Dalal* ('Deliverer from Error'), with their individual struggles to cope with tradition and modernity along the lines described by the Egyptian man of letters Taha Husayn, the American-Jewish convert

to Islam Maryam Jamilah, and the African-American James Baldwin, or the battle of female intellectuals, Maxine Hong Kingston and Mary McCarthy, with patriarchal cultures.<sup>51</sup> Set against this ecumenical background, the essays provide impressions of the socialization of a number of Muslim students who have since matured into leading intellectuals of their own generation.<sup>52</sup>

Yudi Latif and Ali Munhanif both recall painful childhood experiences as a result of their parents' divorce due to religious differences: Munhanif's father belonged to the NU and his mother to the Muhammadiyah, and while Latif's father also came from an NU family, his mother had a secular background.<sup>53</sup> Attending a state school and a *pesantren* in a largely Javanese *abangan* setting, Munhanif sees his introduction to Nurcholish Madjid's secularization thesis as the key to unlocking the existential dilemma he had experienced so far. Together with the writings of other renewal thinkers like Dawam Rahardjo and Djohan Effendi (b.1939), Nurcholish Madjid's ideas made Munhanif realize that 'the struggle for creating an Islamic society cannot be solely approached in terms of politics and power, but involves a cultural struggle in the broadest sense of the word'.<sup>54</sup>

Yudi Latif's account focuses on the tension between an idealized Islam and its contingent historical version. It also captures his personal trauma, resulting from social ostracization due to his father's loyalty to the NU rather than the ruling Golkar party. For that purpose, Latif takes up the motif of the Prophet Muhammad's *mi'raj*, the miraculous nocturnal voyage to Jerusalem described in the Qur'an, but turns it into the very personal 'tearful night journey of a victim of history'.<sup>55</sup> Latif, who has since trained as a sociologist in Australia, served as vice rector of Paramadina University and currently heads the Indonesian Center for Islam and State Studies (PSIK). He displays an acute awareness of the need for understanding Indonesia's political economy and how the country is embedded in a global system. Instead of putting all the blame on the West, he makes a case for a better understanding of Western social sciences and theologies, in order to develop an Islamic alternative that befits the Indonesian situation. An educational journey that took him to the independent Pesantren Modern Gontor, followed by communication studies at the secular Padjadjaran University in Bandung (UNPAD), taught Latif that neither religious 'fanaticism, apologetics, anachronism, plagiarism, or formalism' nor escapist 'spiritual romanticism' and 'intellectual elitism' offer such alternatives.<sup>56</sup> As

one commentator on these autobiographies has suggested, structural changes can only be achieved by working from the margins.<sup>57</sup> In the interstices of these varying approaches to Islam, Yudi Latif stumbled on the *teologi kekhalifahan* or ‘caliphal theology’, which interprets Islam as the liberalization of the whole of humankind by accepting only God as absolute and considering everything else as relative. It humanizes all other aspects of life, while charging humankind with the responsibility of acting as God’s vicegerent on earth. Evidently betraying the influence of Nurcholish Madjid’s secularization thesis, I would argue that rather than calling it a theology, it is more accurately understood as a religious anthropology.<sup>58</sup>

The uncertainties accompanying such a trajectory are best articulated by Budhy Munawar-Rachman in ‘one of the most philosophical contributions to the collection’.<sup>59</sup> Educated at STF Driyarkara and P3M, Munawar-Rachman has been a lecturer at STF and Paramadina University for many years, and worked with Dawam Rahardjo as editor of *Ulumul Qu’ran* and director of LSAF. On account of his twelve years as a director at the Paramadina Foundation and editor of more than fifty books, he can be considered as the foremost custodian of the intellectual legacy of Nurcholish Madjid’s renewal or *pembaruan* thinking. However, his earliest education firmly integrated Munawar-Rachman into the mainstream of Sunni orthodoxy, where ‘fiqh became the science that underpinned social reality’.<sup>60</sup> His interest in physics kindled a desire for finding a rationalized understanding of religion, transforming fixed religious convictions and received rituals into an intellectual and spiritual quest, which he expanded further through readings into popular psychology and the writings of Krishnamurti. However, Munawar-Rachman’s key educational experience was the time he spent at the Higher School for Entrepreneurship (*Sekolah Tinggi Wiraswasta*, STW). This unconventional adult education institute founded by Utomo Danajaya, who later joined Nurcholish Madjid in establishing the Paramadina Foundation, teaches through participatory training and does not offer any formal degrees or qualifications. This approach is based on Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire’s philosophy of education, called the ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ and geared towards grassroots-level social development and empowerment.<sup>61</sup>

In this milieu Budhy Munawar-Rachman was also introduced to the world of Islamic theology and philosophy, becoming captivated by the writings of Harun Nasution and especially his advocacy of a rehabili-

tation of Mu'tazili thought. Another deep impression was left by the publication of the diaries of Ahmad Wahib (1942–73), a protégé of Mukti Ali who had died prematurely in a traffic accident. These influences turned Munawar-Rachman into a 'freethinker who had the courage to think for himself without fear of error'.<sup>62</sup> He was drawn into a study circle run by Ahmad Wahib's close friend Djohan Effendi, where he learned to understand that the Qur'an must be seen as a phenomenon 'reflecting the structures of that society, culture, economy and government, its foreign relations, customs, climate, the personality of the Prophet and his Companions'.<sup>63</sup> Here he was also introduced to Nurcholish Madjid's ideas about secularity and learned to appreciate the distinction between secularism as an ideology and secularization as a social process. Paralleling Yudi Latif's Caliphal theology, this way of thinking could be captured in a new anthropology which turned humankind into God's vicegerent on earth.

After a few years as a social researcher, during which he investigated religious motivation by using the categories developed in Mu'tazili philosophy in order to determine the level of rational thinking in pre-urban societies on the outskirts of Jakarta, Munawar-Rachman joined STF Driyarkara, which was as unconventional as STW and also used a teaching philosophy modeled on the work of Paulo Freire called 'conscientizing research'. Here Munawar-Rachman felt stimulated to engage seriously with the work of Marx, Wittgenstein and Popper, as well as explore other academic fields such as economics and the sociology of development and education. These studies provided him with a more solid philosophical underpinning for rethinking Islamic theologies, such as the one formulated by the Mu'tazila, as functional-rational approaches to modernity, transforming them into an ideology for social change—a Liberation Theology shaped by a new paradigm standing in stark contrast to the privatization of religion found in liberal Protestant theology.<sup>64</sup> It will become clear from later chapters how this forms the foundation for Budhy Munawar-Rachman's later involvement in defending the notions of secularism, pluralism and liberalism.

### *Mazhab Jogja: meeting place of Modernists and Traditionalists*

In Yogyakarta, Abdul Mukti Ali had nourished young budding intellectuals in much the same way as Harun Nasution at IAIN Jakarta. His interest in inter-religious dialogue, the comparative study of religions

and educational innovation continues to influence the research concentration at UIN Sunan Kalijaga to this day. If we consider Mukti Ali's Limited Group of the 1960s as the predecessor of the *Mazhab Jogja*, then it could be argued that Yogyakarta precedes Jakarta in terms of stimulating critical and innovative thinking among Muslims.

As the founding place of the Muhammadiyah, Yogyakarta also remains a stronghold of Indonesia's largest modernist Islamic mass organization. To a degree this is also reflected in the make-up of the Jogja School, but with the caveat that those involved are not representative of the Muhammadiyah mainstream, the earlier mentioned Dahlan Group. Intellectuals who belong to this segment of the Muhammadiyah tend to stay close to the sacred texts in their interpretation of Islamic doctrine as expressed in the works released by the *Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Collection of Rulings by the Muhammadiyah's Legal Affairs Committee).<sup>65</sup> The *Mazhab Jogja* should be considered as a group of:

Leftist Muhammadiyah activists [...] who are very critical of the organization itself and search for the social context of religious beliefs. They can also be regarded as liberal Muhammadiyah activists, in the sense that they strive for progressive renewal.<sup>66</sup>

As such they are the intellectual heirs to erstwhile members of Mukti Ali's Limited Group, which had included Dawam Rahardjo, Ahmad Syafii Maarif and Ahmad Wahib. Their influence was greatest between 1995 and 2005, when two former students of Fazlur Rahman—Amien Rais and Syafii Maarif—served successively as the organization's chairman. Under their leadership the Muhammadiyah released a controversial thematic interpretation of the Qur'an, while the tasks of the Council for Religious Rulings (*Majelis Tarjih*) were expanded, as reflected by its renaming as the Council for Religious Rulings and the Furtherance of Islamic Thought (*Majelis Tarjih dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam*, MTPPI).<sup>67</sup>

The Islamic thought issuing from the Jogja School makes for an interesting mix of ideas. Although, like its counterpart in Jakarta, it focuses on the substance rather than the formal aspects of Islam's teachings, it combines a different set of discursive formations. Whereas the Ciputat School is inspired by Nurcholish Madjid's *pembaruan* thinking, the Jogja School is more accommodating to the 'idealistic' approach of a figure such as Syafii Maarif, who draws his inspiration



from South Asian Muslim intellectuals such as Muhammad Iqbal and Abul A'la Maududi, but above all his PhD adviser Fazlur Rahman, regarding Islam as a political, social and cultural driving force.<sup>68</sup> In addition, the thinking of the Jogja School is also strongly influenced by a strand of alternative social theorizing formulated by Kuntowijoyo in his Prophetic Social Science and shaped by Moeslim Abdurrahman's Transformative Islam. However, it was mainly Dawam Rahardjo who created the opportunities for transposing these theoretical models into more concrete applications of community development and empowerment through his involvement in research institutes and think tanks in Yogyakarta and Jakarta, his work as an economist at UGM and the Muhammadiyah University of Malang, and as rector of Islamic University 45 in Bekasi (*Universitas Islam 45*, Unisma 45). Subsequently, the ideas emerging from these intellectual cross-pollinations were synthesized and given further prominence by other scholars of roughly the same generation, such as Abdul Munir Mulkhan (b.1946) and M. Amin Abdullah (b.1953).<sup>69</sup>

Born in Central Java, but partly raised on Sumatra, Munir Mulkhan studied education, law, philosophy and sociology at various IAINs and universities in Indonesia, eventually obtaining a doctorate from Yogyakarta's UGM.<sup>70</sup> During these years he made a living as a teacher and as a civil servant working for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, before settling down as a member of the faculty of education at Yogyakarta's IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. Since then he has written widely on issues such as Islamic education, Javanese culture and the history of the Muhammadiyah. Inspired by Sukarno's ideology of proletarianism, called *Marhaenisme*, and Hasan Hanafi's 'Islamic Left', Mulkhan's writings on the emancipation of Indonesia's peasantry introduce concepts such as 'marginalized theology', 'marginalized Sufism' and 'proletarian Muhammadiyah', all of which have become very important for shaping a leftist Muhammadiyah discourse.<sup>71</sup> During Syafii Maarif's term in office as chairman, Mulkhan was elected a member of the Muhammadiyah's central board, where he was joined by his colleague from UIN Yogyakarta, M. Amin Abdullah, until they were purged in the Muhammadiyah's conservative turn at its 2005 congress

Amin Abdullah is a graduate of the Pondok Modern Gontor and studied comparative religions at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. Together with Komaruddin Hidayat, he was one of the first Indonesian students to be given a scholarship for postgraduate studies in Turkey, where he

obtained a doctorate in philosophy from Middle East Technical University (METU), on the basis of a comparative study of al-Ghazali and Kant.<sup>72</sup> Upon his return to Indonesia, he began teaching at the IAINs of Yogyakarta and Surabaya, as well as UGM. After serving as director of the graduate school and acting as deputy head of the Islamic Research Institute at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, he became the IAIN's deputy rector and then its rector. It was during his tenure that the institute was given university status in 2002. In spite of his demanding administrative responsibilities, Abdullah continues to write extensively and was also responsible for editing the controversial thematic interpretation of the Qur'an.<sup>73</sup> With a special interest in the philosophy of education and its potential for redefining the academic study of Islam and as the school's leading academic philosopher, he directed a research project which has resulted in a new 'integrative-interconnective' approach to the study of Islam in higher education. It offered a foundation for his junior colleagues Mahmud Arif (b.1972) and Abd Rahman Assegaf (b.1964) to develop applied philosophies of education which will be explored in the final chapter.<sup>74</sup>

In spite of this preponderance of Muhammadiyah activists, it is important to emphasize the Jogja School's cultural-religious hybridity by pointing to the roles of another former member of the Limited Group, Djohan Effendi, and of the NU's Masdar F. Mas'udi. Originally from Kalimantan, Effendi belongs to the Lahore branch of the Ahmadiyah.<sup>75</sup> After his studies he served for many years in the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as on the presidential staffs of Suharto and Abdurrahman Wahid. Later in his career he went to Australia to pursue a PhD at Deakin University. As chairman of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace (ICRP), Effendi continues Mukti Ali's work by playing a prominent role in interfaith dialogues. After being educated by leading NU scholars, Masdar Mas'udi came to the IAIN in Yogyakarta to study Islamic law. This academic background and his involvement in student politics (and subsequent arrest by the New Order regime) gave him the right credentials within the transformed NU under Abdurrahman Wahid to take the helm at P3M and eventually become a member of the NU's central board (*Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama*, PBNU).<sup>76</sup> Mas'udi's involvement in the Jogja School foreshadowed the closer ties of other *nahdhiyin* (or *nahdliyyin*)—Muslims from NU backgrounds—with the Muhammadiyah in later years.<sup>77</sup>

A somewhat peripheral figure at UIN Sunan Kalijaga is Yudian Wahyudi (b.1960). This Kalimantan-born legal scholar spent many years in North America for PhD studies at McGill and postdoctoral positions at Harvard and Tufts University. Returning to Yogyakarta as a professor in the philosophy of law, he has also served as dean of the faculty of Islamic law, before accepting a secondment to the government as assistant deputy minister of social welfare responsible for religious education.<sup>78</sup> As a philosopher of law, Wahyudi has been involved in debates on the application of Islamic law in Indonesia, while his work on hermeneutics and comparative studies of Arab and Indonesian Muslim intellectuals foreshadows the contributions by a new batch of young academics taking up positions at the UIN at the beginning of the twenty-first century, including the former director of the Center for Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm), Moch Nur Ichwan (b.1971) and the current head of the Sharia Faculty Noorhaidi Hasan (b.1971).<sup>79</sup>

### *The influence of the Ciputat and Jogja Schools*

Although individuals such as Azyumardi Azra, Komaruddin Hidayat and M. Amin Abdullah became very senior academic administrators with considerable influence over public opinion, Latif insists that the Muslim intelligentsia born in the 1950s-1960s was rendered politically powerless in comparison to their predecessors from the first postcolonial generation.<sup>80</sup> With the increasing manipulation of Islamic parties and the close watch kept over campuses during the 1970s and 1980s, the HMI's influence began to erode and with it the role of student politics in changing Indonesian society.<sup>81</sup> The second postcolonial generation found an alternative outlet in establishing new Islamic publishing houses catering to the earlier noted reading culture.<sup>82</sup>

For example, in the wake of the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran, Mizan, the publishing house of Haidar Bagir in Bandung, began introducing Iranian thinkers such as Ali Shari'ati to an Indonesian readership. The increasingly frequent and intensive contacts with other Middle Eastern countries further stimulated the appetite for Arabic authors. Those Muslim intellectuals with more traditional backgrounds and greater familiarity with the rich heritage of Islamic learning have criticized this tendency to glorify the perceived center of the Muslim world by the 'new learner of Islam on the periphery of the Muslim world' (read: puritan reformists), as well as their inclination 'to be

obsessed with Arabic terminologies and Islamist ideas as an over-compensation for their poor mastery of Arabic and Islamic literature'.<sup>83</sup> With a bow to Ernest Gellner, Latif observes that this shift in the religious disposition of many Muslim students as a result of their recent move to the cities is reflective of the displacement of the 'anthropolatry' (the widespread admiration of rural Muslims for prominent scholars and spiritual leader) by the 'bibliolatry' of the urban middle classes.<sup>84</sup>

The juxtaposition of the Ciputat and Jogja Schools enabled Zuly Qodir to make a comparison of these two intellectual clusters. He sees a general convergence in terms of their shared substantivist interpretation of religion, as well as their interest in multiculturalism and the relationship between Islam and state, which leads them to promote a tolerant and inclusivist Islam, advocating pluralist religious education and stimulating interfaith dialogues.<sup>85</sup> The contrasts between the two are therefore relative rather than absolute; a matter of accentuation, or stressing different aspects. Because of its proximity to the centers of government in the capital Jakarta, the Ciputat School appears the more dominant one in terms of political thinking, whereas the Jogja School plays up its culturally hybrid position in the interstices between Javanese culture and Islamic modernism by focussing instead on cultural thinking. As a Yogyakarta-based intellectual, Qodir does not hide his satisfaction that its UIN Sunan Kalijaga is catching up with its Jakarta counterpart, not just by expanding its doctoral programs in religion, philosophy, education and law, but also in terms of academic prowess, because the scholars in the capital have been too preoccupied with gaining access to the centers of political power, whereas Yogyakarta-based academics remain focussed on understanding Islam in both the Muhammadiyah and NU interpretations. At the same time Qodir is perceptive enough to note that these differences can actually reinforce each other and thus strengthen creative and progressive Islamic thinking.

Aside from these clusters of scholars and activists transcending the divide between traditionalists and modernists, and the blurring of ideological lines between the two, many young intellectuals retain their allegiance and formal links with the NU or Muhammadiyah.

### *New Ulama and 'moderatists' in the NU*

Renewal-minded NU cadres rising in the wake of the organization's return to its foundational principles in 1984 included not only individ-

uals such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Mustofa Bisri, but also older figures such as the academic Ibrahim Hosen (1917–2001), the scholar-politician and former general chairman of MUI, Ali Yafie (b.1926) and NU general president Sahal Mahfudh (1937–2014). Since then, they are gradually being replaced by second-generation postcolonial NU intellectuals like Masdar Mas'udi (b.1954) and the current executive chairman of the PBNU, Said Aqil Siraj (b.1953).<sup>86</sup> Educated in Saudi Arabia but also an admirer of the Iranian cleric Ayatollah Khomeini (1901–89), Siraj is more restrained than Mas'udi and thus more acceptable to the still influential conservative bloc within NU. Consequently, he was successful in his bid to succeed Hasyim Muzadi at the 2010 NU congress, while Mas'udi failed in obtaining one of the other top positions in the central board. By compromising on individuals who were considered too liberal, the moderates were also able to bargain for offsetting the growing conservatism of the ageing Mahfudh by the election of Mustofa Bisri as his deputy in the consultative council.<sup>87</sup> The prominence of such figures led not only to a better appreciation of the corpus of traditional Islamic learning in 'urban *Pembaruan* circles', it also required a new definition of the label 'traditionalist'.<sup>88</sup> As part of the NU's recalibration process since the return to the *Khittah* 1926, internal power in the NU shifted from political functionaries controlling the organization's executive to religious scholars serving on its consultative council. This signals a new appreciation for what Michael Feener has called the NU's cultural capital: the new *ulama* capable of marrying solid religious knowledge to a broad vision of the role of Islam in Indonesian public life.

A key aspect of this reorientation within the NU was a rethinking of the notion of *ahl al-sunnah wa' al-jama'ah*, or *Aswaja* for short, by recasting themselves as the real proponents of a moderate and tolerant Islam. Ahmad Najib Burhani rightly observes that the understanding of the term 'moderate' has undergone a further and even more fundamental change since 9/11. After the American administration under George W. Bush unleashed its 'War on Terror', the term has become political jargon for interpretations of Islam that are supportive of US policy. It is therefore not surprising that the designation 'moderate Islam' is now highly contested among Muslim intellectuals.<sup>89</sup> However, in contrast to the early 2000s, during the 1980s and 1990s the debates in NU circles had been much more theological in nature. These interpretations were primarily elaborated by Masdar Mas'udi and Said Aqil

Siraj. Together with his more senior fellow jurists Yafie and Mahfudh, Mas'udi also played a prominent role in the social and contextualized rereading of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh sosial, fiqh kontekstual*) which will be further unpacked in the chapter on Islamic law.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, their emphasis on the aspect of tolerance will prove of great significance when turning to the discussion of religious freedom and the treatment of minority groups within Indonesia's Muslim community in the final chapter of this book.

Another central figure in NU-related NGO activities, but who is generally not regarded as a religious scholar per se, is Ahmad Suaedy (b.1963). Educated at both secular state schools and *pesantren* in the central Javanese district of Kebumen, he studied Islamic law at Yogyakarta's IAIN Sunan Kalijaga and English at the secular UGM. After working as a journalist and researcher at LKiS and P3M, he became a leading figure in NU-affiliated NGO Lakpesdam before being appointed as director of the Wahid Institute. An active participant in inter-religious dialogue since the 1990s, in 2012 he initiated and coordinated the establishment of the Abdurrahman Wahid Centre for Interfaith Dialogue and Peace on the campus of Universitas Indonesia in Depok.<sup>91</sup>

As mentors of an emergent group of younger scholars and activists now working in academia and NGOs, Siraj, Mas'udi and Suaedy have had an active hand in grooming the NU cadres who are referred to as *anak muda NU*.<sup>92</sup>

### *The anak muda NU and Islamic post-traditionalism*

The *anak muda NU* made themselves known for the first time in the earlier mentioned collection of autobiographical essays, published in 1999 under the title *Hybrid Culture*. Fauzan Saleh was the first scholar to take note of these upcoming contributors to future Islamic discourses in Indonesia and put them on the country's intellectual map. In his study of twentieth-century Islamic theology in Indonesia, he offers a preliminary analysis of the criticisms of the writings and ideas of their intellectual predecessors, which these scholar-activists began formulating in the very first year of *Reformasi*.<sup>93</sup> Born between the late 1960s and early 1970s, they belong to the third generation of postcolonial intellectuals. Generally emerging from the traditionalist environment of Java's *pesantren* world, most of its exponents received a com-

bined secular and religious education at state schools and reformed *pesantren*. Like their immediate predecessors from the second generation, they then went on to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the IAINs and UINs in places such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Semarang and Bandung. A number of them have also attended the Christian-run STF Driyarkara or the Saudi-sponsored Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*, LIPIA).

While sharing a comparable solid grounding in the Islamic tradition with simultaneous exposure to recent advances in the Western human sciences as Muslim intellectuals from the preceding generation, the young scholars who attained intellectual maturity in the early years of the twenty-first century distinguish themselves from their predecessors by also including the writings of these mentors in the critical examination of Indonesian Islamic thinking.<sup>94</sup> For this they draw their first inspiration from select Arab–Islamic scholars and intellectuals, known as the *turathiyyun* or ‘heritage thinkers’, who use structural linguistics and anthropology, deconstructionist text analysis and semiotics to reinvigorate rational ways of Islamic thinking developed in the past by the ninth-century Mu‘tazilite School and the twelfth-century philosopher Ibn Rushd. Subsequently the *anak muda NU* also began engaging directly with postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theory developed in Western academe. Because of this combined appreciation of both the Islamic tradition and contemporary thinking, they refer to themselves also as ‘Islamic post-traditionalists’ or ‘postra’ for short.

The term was first introduced in 2000 by a young writer named Ahmad Baso (b.1971), who used it as the title for his translation of a collection of essays by one of these critical Arab–Islamic thinkers, the Moroccan philosopher Muhammad ‘Abid al-Jabiri (1936–2010).<sup>95</sup> It was given wider currency through the journal *Tashwirul Afkar*, the earlier mentioned periodical published by Lakpesdam. In 2001, its editors dedicated an entire issue to the phenomenon, which is now considered the ‘manifesto’ of Indonesian Islamic post-traditionalism. The first substantial analyses of Islamic post-traditionalism itself begin appearing from 2005 onwards. In many instances these are self-defining and self-reflective writings by *anak muda NU* who have taken part in the formulation of the discourse itself. In some cases these have evolved into fully-fledged monographs such as *The Deconstruction of Tradition* by Ahmad Ali Riyadi (b.1972) and *Islamic Post-Traditional-*

*ism: The Discourse of Intellectualism in the NU Community*, an edited version of a doctoral thesis written by one of the founding editors of *Tashwirul Afkar*, Rumadi (b.1970).<sup>96</sup>

In an earlier article entitled 'The Islamic Renewal Movement of the Kaum Muda Nahdlatul Ulama', Riyadi takes a self-critical stance, acknowledging that the conceptualization of Islamic post-traditionalism is still rather ambiguous and that it has been easier to establish what it is not than to come up with an accurate definition. Another of its initiators, Marzuki Wahid (b.1971), observed that Islamic post-traditionalism is not traditionalist or neo-traditionalist; neither modernist nor neo-modernist.<sup>97</sup> Riyadi also takes up the feature of marginality, characterizing the young NU cadres as '*kelompok pemikir Islam proletar (pinggiran)*' or 'proletarian (marginal) Muslim thinkers'.<sup>98</sup> However, he added the caveat that it is not meant as a Marxist class distinction, but a reflection of the intellectual liminality I have described earlier. The *anak muda NU* moved from the small towns of rural Indonesia, where they had been taught by *ulama* shunning formal academic accreditation, to cities such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya, in order to continue their studies and to pursue careers as researchers and activists in such organizations as Lakpesdam, LKPSM and LKiS.<sup>99</sup> Employment by these types of research institutes, think tanks and NGOs sets *anak muda NU* apart from scholars who opted instead for working at universities and other tertiary educational institutions. Although perhaps at the margins of academia, this still makes them an interesting test case for Bruce Robbins' proposition of intellectuals who, as part of their 'secular vocations', try to subvert the bureaucratic straitjacket into which society wants to force higher education. At the same time it gives their research a practical relevance, and later in this book we shall see how that is translated into social and political activism, advocating democratization, defending religious freedom and tolerance, and the upholding of universal human rights standards. This is not to say that the *anak muda NU* are not interested in fundamental philosophical questions. On the contrary, as will be explored in great detail in the next chapter, discourse critique and critical text analysis are an integral part of Islamic post-traditionalism, and one of its main pioneers sees himself first and foremost as a critic rather than caretaker of the Islamic tradition—to use Russell McCutcheon's term for what he regards as the proper practice for scholars of religion.<sup>100</sup>



So even though it is difficult to formulate a definition, Ahmad Riyadi emphasizes that the Islamic post-traditionalist discourse is very much defined by epistemological concerns. In contrast to the neo-traditionalism of Abdurrahman Wahid's generation, it does not seek simply to disentangle itself from *taqlid* or 'blind imitation', but subjects the Islamic tradition to critical examination. In that respect it pays to draw a parallel with postmodernism, which Riyadi sees as a mixed product or a consequence of modernism, notwithstanding the fact that post-modernist thinkers have tried to deny any such connection by claiming that their thinking constitutes a radical epistemological break. In a similar sense, Islamic post-traditionalists can be said to have the ambition to take down the barriers that surround traditional Islam, by engaging in a progressive critique and re-interpretation before developing a new tradition. In Riyadi's estimation, this gives Islamic post-traditionalism a 'liberating nuance'.<sup>101</sup>

That view is shared by Rumadi who adds the observation that—like other intellectuals—Muslim thinkers too are susceptible to fashions and trends. After the first experiments with transformative Islam in the 1990s and the initial excitement of *Reformasi* during which many young Indonesian Muslim intellectuals became absorbed in political activism, there occurred a shift towards a more cerebral engagement with postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theory. Their first introduction often came through reading the work of Arab thinkers who pioneered the development of new methods and approaches for studying Islam and its wider intellectual heritage. Aside from Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, these include the Algerian historian of Islam Mohammed Arkoun (1928–2010), the Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi (b.1935), his student Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (1943–2010), and the Moroccan social scientist Fatima Mernissi (b.1940).<sup>102</sup> According to Rumadi, these pioneering Arab thinkers strike a chord with progressive Muslim intellectuals worldwide, but, whereas their political views are now quite well known, the philosophical underpinnings of their ideas have not yet been sufficiently scrutinized. In presenting Islamic post-traditionalism as—first and foremost—a rigorously new episteme, Rumadi employs the term *mazhab kritis*, or critical school, and initially relies heavily on Ahmad Baso's introduction to his translation of al-Jabiri's essays.<sup>103</sup> These texts, as well as the writings of other scholar-thinkers, provide the key ingredients for Islamic post-traditionalist thinking and give direction to the *anak muda NU*'s ambition

to develop a new—critical and anti-hegemonic—Islamic philosophy of knowledge. In spite of differences in topical focus and ways of elaboration, heritage thinkers share an epistemological concern for liberating Islamic thought from the shackles of tradition and text which have stunted it for so long.<sup>104</sup> In one way or another, their methodologies can be considered as forms of text criticism and discourse analysis.

Aside from the epistemological and methodological questions raised by al-Jabiri and Arkoun, the resulting need for an inter- or multi-disciplinary approach to the study of Islam begs the question how to balance its historical–linguistic, theological–philosophical and sociological–anthropological aspects.<sup>105</sup> For a possible answer, Rumadi and Riyadi refer to the writings of M. Amin Abdullah on an alternative approach to the academic study of Islam and its impact on Islamic higher education in Indonesia.<sup>106</sup> His suggestion for a circular—as opposed to the more traditional linear or parallel—model is thought to offer an alternative way of accommodating and integrating these different disciplinary approaches, a point that will be picked up and further unpacked in the final chapter of this book.

Riyadi, Rumadi and Saleh all rightly identify Ahmad Baso as the pioneer of this new Islamic intellectualism.<sup>107</sup> In the final pages of his *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Indonesia*, Saleh showcases Baso's early writings on civil society and his critique of Islamic neo-modernism as the first examples of a new way in which he and other like-minded intellectuals from Indonesia's traditionalist Islamic milieu envisage carrying Muslim thinking into the twenty-first century.<sup>108</sup> Born on the eastern island of Sulawesi, Ahmad Baso was educated at secular schools and a number of *pesantren* before moving to Java in 1990 for his further education: first at the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences (LIPIA) and later at the Christian STF Driyarkara in Jakarta. At this latter institution, his intellectual horizons were widened by a study program that introduced him to both Western and Muslim scholarship in Islam, as well as postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theory.<sup>109</sup> In his autobiographical essay for *Hybrid Culture*, Baso notes that, in contrast to many of his friends and colleagues, he had no desire to spend his working life at NU-affiliated NGOs or think tanks such as P3M and LKiS. At the time he was more interested in theory and philosophy than the practice-oriented initiatives of leading NU figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Masdar F. Mas'udi. On the advice of his friend Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, who worked

at the Paramadina Foundation, Baso initially embarked on a career in journalism, by joining the staff of the Islamic periodical *Ummat* in 1994. At *Ummat*, he wrote an article about Islamic law, which was then accepted by Haidar Bagir for a Festschrift in honor of Ali Yafie. This was to be the beginning of his writing career, and by 1999 Baso had already published his first full-length book.<sup>110</sup>

Throughout the years, Baso claims that he found himself a loner on the fringes, doggedly plotting a solo course among peers who were as yet unaware of the critical models developed by Habermas and the Frankfurt School, and without understanding of Foucault's discursive formations or Derrida's logocentrism and their significance for the study of texts, or the influence of Bourdieu's concepts of 'symbolic capital' and '*imaginaire social*', which he had developed in the course of his research of Algerian society.<sup>111</sup> That all changes after the publication in 2000 of his Indonesian translation of a number of essays written by al-Jabiri and the launch of the *Tashwirul Afkar* issue on Islamic post-traditionalism in 2001. Since these early days Ahmad Baso has become a prolific author whose writings evince wide reading in contemporary Islamic and Western thinking, while demonstrating interesting ways of engaging with a variety of themes. Although he was appointed a member of Indonesia's Human Rights Commission (*Komnas HAM*), even today Baso remains at the margins of Indonesia's Muslim intellectual establishment, in the sense that he still prefers pursuing his oppositional work outside the bureaucratized professional framework in which many of his peers are operating. An explanation for this liminal position might be found in his rather forthright writing style, which has been characterized as 'bombastic', and exhibiting an absence of modesty which can lead to irritation in others.<sup>112</sup> For example, in his autobiographical sketch of 1999 he defiantly suggests that his peers were less interested in the more demanding intellectual exploits he had set for himself on account of their allegedly limited linguistic aptitude, which prevented them from studying relevant materials in Arabic, English and French.<sup>113</sup>

Other Islamic post-traditionalists have found themselves in similar marginal and peripheral positions. In the early 2000s, Nur Khalik Ridwan (b.1974) began drawing the attention of other young intellectuals with publications such as *Bourgeois Islam and Proletarian Islam*, *Bourgeois Pluralism*, and *Bourgeois Religion*. In these books, Ridwan introduces a class dimension into progressive Islamic thinking; marry-

ing the postmodern deconstruction of texts developed by Barthes, Derrida and Foucault with the ideology critiques of Louis Althusser and Michel Pêcheux.<sup>114</sup> With further inspiration drawn from Ali Harb, a Lebanese philosopher also partial to Derrida's deconstruction, Ridwan's borrowings form part of a grand scheme for the construction of a new Muslim society in Indonesia that challenges the middle-class orientation of both the puritan bloc within the Muhammadiyah and Nurcholish Madjid's renewal thinking which, in Ridwan's view, has morphed from being an opposition movement into the dominant discursive formation of Islamic neo-modernism.

Ahmad Ali Riyadi's earlier mentioned identification of a group of 'proletarian (marginal) Muslim thinkers' fits as an Islamic post-traditionalist counterpart to Abdul Munir Mul Khan's writings on a 'proletarian Muhammadiyah'.<sup>115</sup> In his *Deconstruction of Tradition*, Riyadi plays on the designations *Mazhab Ciputat* and *Mazhab Jogja* by introducing a *Mazhab Jakarta*, which he uses to distinguish the Islamic post-traditionalists from other intellectuals who stay closer to the renewal thinking of their peers from older generations.<sup>116</sup> Ridwan's *Mazhab Jakarta* encompasses a virtual roll call of individuals who will return in other chapters of this book. Aside from Rumadi and Ahmad Baso, it also includes the equally prolific and omnipresent Zuhairi Misrawi (b.1977), a Madurese graduate of Cairo's al-Azhar who has also been active as a program coordinator at Lakpesdam, P3M and the Institute for the Study of Progressive Islam (*Lembaga Studi Islam Progresif*, LSIP). In addition he was involved in *Tashwirul Afkar* and active as a freelance writer. Misrawi is also a regular face on Indonesian television as a commentator on Islamic affairs, and appears to be as obsessed with football as is Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>117</sup> Riyadi further includes Lakpesdam staff member Imdadun Rahmat (b.1971) and Khamami Zada (b.1975), another editor of *Tashwirul Afkar*.<sup>118</sup> Yogyakarta is also the place of origin of another Islamic post-traditionalist: Marzuki Wahid, a graduate of the city's UIN Sunan Kalijaga and former PMII student union activist who has since transferred to Jakarta to work for Lakpesdam. Other graduates from UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UGM, such as the researchers and publicists Imam Aziz (b.1962) and Hairus Salim HS (b.1969), chose to remain in Yogyakarta and take up positions at LKiS.<sup>119</sup>

*The network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (JIMM)*

As the modernist mirror image of the Islamic post-traditionalists, or *anak muda NU*, the Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (*Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah*, JIMM) was established in late 2003 for the purpose of stimulating the study of contemporary Muhammadiyah thinking, especially as it relates to the dialogue between Islam and the West and finding a ‘hermeneutical key’ for dealing with social issues such as poverty, backwardness and religious unrest.<sup>120</sup> Like their counterparts in the NU, JIMM challenges hegemonic readings of the Islamic tradition, which they try to subvert by proposing alternative, multicultural interpretations.<sup>121</sup> Borrowing an expression originally used by the late NU leader Abdurrahman Wahid, one of JIMM’s founders, Pradana Boy ZTF (b.1977), referred to JIMM itself as a ‘text open to multiple interpretations’ (*teks multitafsir*).<sup>122</sup>

However, in contrast to the sustained mentorship received by young NU cadres from the organization’s senior leadership, the formal support for JIMM from the Muhammadiyah power structures was short-lived because the members are considered protégés of what the organization’s conservative elements disparagingly refer to as *Paman Sam* or ‘Uncle Sam’—a pun for the three senior figures in the Muhammadiyah’s progressive wing: Syafii Maarif, Amin Abdullah and Munir Mulkhan.<sup>123</sup> Their influence was noticeably reduced at the Muhammadiyah’s 2005 congress, when Maarif was replaced as general chairman by Din Syamsuddin, while Amin Abdullah and Munir Mulkhan lost their positions in the central board of the Muhammadiyah (*Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah*, PPM).<sup>124</sup> Despite his relative youth and a PhD degree from UCLA, the new chairman sided with the conservative mainstream. Signalling the demise of ‘suspect’ innovative thinking and the restoration of permissible renewal, the Muhammadiyah’s MTPPI reverted to its old name: *Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid* (Council for Religious Rulings and Renewal).<sup>125</sup> Notwithstanding its intellectual vibrancy, JIMM was also publicly vilified and pushed to the sidelines.<sup>126</sup>

Without the backing of the current Muhammadiyah leadership, JIMM members are now forced to use other channels and forums to disseminate their ideas for progressive engagement with the Muhammadiyah’s intellectual heritage. JIMM co-founder Zuly Qodir (b.1971), who was cited earlier in this chapter, is a prolific writer whose publications include books on the sociology of religion, liberal

Islam, Islamic law and democracy, and the renewal of Islamic thinking. A sociologist by training with a doctorate from UGM, he has worked at LKiS and the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue (Institute DIAN/Interfidei). In spite of his JIMM connections, even after the organization's conservative turn, he also continues to lecture at the Muhammadiyah University in Yogyakarta. The most important institution as a platform for carrying forth the ideas and objectives of JIMM is the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity in Jakarta, where JIMM Presidium member Ahmad Fuad Fanani and activist Fajar Riza ul Haq (b.1979) now hold the positions of research director and executive director respectively.<sup>127</sup> Other young intellectuals with Muhammadiyah associations have opted for overseas academic careers; among them is Ahmad Najib Burhani, who was educated at UIN Hidayatullah in Jakarta, pursued postgraduate studies at the university of Leiden and Manchester, and then moved to the United States where he obtained a PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Despite his lengthy stay abroad, he still has a research association with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, LIPI). Burhani also maintains the highly informative *Muhammadiyah Studies* blog.<sup>128</sup>

### *Liberal Islam Network (JIL)*

The Liberal Islam Network—usually referred to by its Indonesian acronym JIL—presents a very different and even more controversial way of transcending the traditionalist–modernist divide. In fact, judging by its own founding principles, JIL actually replaces this dichotomy by the alternative, but equally contentious, binary of liberal versus radical Muslims.<sup>129</sup> An increasing problem for JIL is that the modus operandi chosen by some of its leading activists is almost as abrasive and confrontational as that of its Islamist detractors. This has resulted in the erosion of the support base for its agenda. Without putting all the blame directly on the network itself, Ahmad Najib Burhani sees a link between JIL's unabashed propagation of liberalism and the downfall of JIMM in 2005.<sup>130</sup> The confrontational attitude displayed by the network's activists almost certainly contributed to MUI's decision to issue Fatwa 7, which is in no small measure directly targeting JIL.<sup>131</sup> In fact, two years earlier, the *Forum Ulama Umat Islam* or 'Forum of Scholars of the Islamic Community'—an organization without official recognition based

in Bandung—had already issued a fatwa of their own in which they had condemned to death JIL founder Ulil Abshar-Abdalla (b.1967).<sup>132</sup>

Together with co-founder Luthfi Assyaukanie (b.1967) and another activist named Novriantoni Kahar (b.1975), Riyadi has included Ulil Abshar-Abdalla also in his list of *anak muda NU* affiliated with the *Mazhab Jakarta*.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, Abshar-Abdalla comes from a Central Javanese family of NU *ulama* and was educated at various *pesantren*, ironically including one led by the late Sahal Mahfudh. Like Ahmad Baso, Abshar-Abdalla also studied at LIPIA and STF Driyarkara.<sup>134</sup> As a former chairman of Lakpesdam and son-in-law of NU vice chairman A. Mustofa Bisri, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla is definitely very well connected in NU circles. However, he is also considered too controversial for senior NU positions, as became clear during the 2010 NU congress.<sup>135</sup> He left Indonesia to obtain an MA from Boston University, but his involvement with the Freedom Institute, the NU and SBY's Democrat Party proved too much of a distraction to continue with his intended doctoral studies at Harvard.<sup>136</sup> The simultaneous inclusion of Luthfi Assyaukanie in the post-traditionalist *Mazhab Jakarta* is debatable. Like Ali Munhanif and Yudi Latif, Luthfi is of mixed traditionalist-modernist parentage, thus sharing the same hybrid background as their mentor Nurcholish Madjid. Holding a BA from the University of Jordan, an MA from the International Islamic University in Malaysia, a doctorate from the University of Melbourne and a lectureship at Paramadina University, Luthfi has the academic credentials of a 'professionalized intellectual' that set him apart from Ahmad Baso, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla and their intellectual patron Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>137</sup>

This survey of the milieu in which the discursive formations of progressive Islamic thinking takes shape shows that that its articulators belong to a new generation of intellectuals, consisting of young post-traditionalists from the NU, Muhammadiyah's JIMM and JIL activists.

### *The antagonists*

According to the conventions of classical drama, the performance of protagonists assumes that there are also antagonists. Within the framework of the present research, we find them in the guise of the detractors of the discourses formulated by progressive Muslim intellectuals. As the proponents of Islamist agendas began entering the political and intellectual stage in the new openness of the post-Suharto era, it became clear

that—like their intellectual opponents on the other side of the Islamic spectrum—they encompass an array of varying positions in terms of conceptualizing the political role of religion. However, their operational bases are different from those of their intellectual and political adversaries. Cut off by the New Order from a return to the political arena, the classical Muslim modernists who had controlled the Masyumi party had to look for other opportunities to exercise influence.<sup>138</sup> As early as 1967, former Masyumi chairman Muhammad Natsir (1908–93) and the former state minister, diplomat, and scholar Muhammad Rasjidi (1915–2001) found this alternative outlet by reinterpreting the injunction that every Muslim is expected to engage in spreading the Islamic faith, called *dakwah* (from the Arabic *da‘wa*). In his history of Indonesian Muslim intellectualism, Yudi Latif observed that:

Before then, Indonesian Muslims tended to use the Arabic term *tabligh*, or dissemination, which is more associated with verbal propagation. With the introduction of the term *dakwah*, which implies a broader missionary endeavour, Islamic propagation moved from its preoccupation with verbal preaching [*bi‘l-lisan*] to more practical action [*bi‘l-hal*].<sup>139</sup>

This strategic decision was not only motivated by Mohammad Natsir and Mohammad Rasjidi’s personal frustrations over their exclusion from politics. A number of like-minded reformist scholars and former Masyumi leaders also contended that—even if they were permitted—Islamic political parties would not be able to garnish sufficient support from Indonesia’s Muslim community anyway. This was because Their leaders had failed to develop a common vision, whereas—in spite of their nominal majority—Indonesian Muslims were also qualitatively falling short in terms of their religious credentials. To address these failings and shortcomings, Natsir and Rasjidi established the *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII, or Indonesian Council of Islamic Propagation), which was envisaged as the vehicle for a better integration of the Muslim community in terms of both religious and political commitment. Although Latif calls it a ‘last attempt by Muslim intellectuals of Natsir’s generation to Islamize national politics through non-political means’ and ‘the final step of the Natsir generation in the historical project of Islamizing the Indonesian intelligentsia’, it created a platform for younger Islamist activists to fulfil their own agendas.<sup>140</sup> In fact, although identifying DDII as a core player in the doctrinal hardening of the Islamists, Feillard and Madinier observe that its theological methods are so diverse that they



'have been called "of all directions" (*manhaj sanasini*)'.<sup>141</sup> The accent thus shifted from explicit political activism to what they call 'moralising Islamism'.<sup>142</sup>

As the number of university students from rural backgrounds began to grow, Latif notes that in spite of their eventually diametrically opposed points of view and opinions, renewal thinkers and *dakwah* activists both catered to the 'socio-psychological deprivation' of the same constituency of newly urbanized students.<sup>143</sup> The alternative Islamic discourse rooted in late 1960s Islamic renewal thinking was not only shaped within HMI circles, but also continued to be developed in discussion groups at the IAINs. Whereas Indonesia's institutions of higher religious education remained custodians of Nurcholish Madjid's *Pembaruan* Movement, the country's secular universities became strongholds of the *dakwah* movement. In contrast to the informal and unstructured Ciputat and Jogja Schools, the DDII provided the Islamists with a well-funded and efficient infrastructure for their Islamic propagation efforts. This way, campus *dakwah* activists were extremely efficient in canvassing support thanks to their superior organization from the late 1970s onwards.

While critical of the Western influences informing the ideas of the *Pembaruan* Movement, as students of technical and other professional subjects in secular universities Islamists do not object to the use of science, technology or rational thought as such; on the contrary even. However, they reject the term modernization because of its association with Westernization, showing themselves deaf or blind to Nurcholish Madjid's argument that such an equation is erroneous. They were also very suspicious of the free-ranging intellectual deliberations by what they called 'liberals' because of the danger that they would fracture the Muslim community. In their view, such *intra*-Islamic disputes were at the very root of the Muslims' political impotence. Subscribing to the slogan that Islam was a complete way of life and there can be no separation between religious and political life, they were much more favorably predisposed towards the activist interpretation of *dakwah* and seeking association with Natsir's DDII.

Two activists from Sumatra, Imaduddin Abdulrahim (the later co-initiator of ICMI) and Endang Saefudin Anshari (1938–96), turned the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) into their main base of operations, running highly successful three-day training programs for 'preacher combatants' (*Latihan Mujahid Dakwah*, LMD). An informal

network until 1977, it was transformed into the Communication Forum of the Indonesian Mosque Youth (*Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Masjid Indonesia*, BKPMI) and began spreading the same formula to other university campuses across Indonesia.<sup>144</sup> While this first postcolonial generation was able to flex its political muscle to some extent during the early 1970s, the government decided it was time for another clampdown when ideological positions became increasingly polarized between 1974 and 1978. In conjunction with the parliamentary decision to reintroduce the Pancasila as the official state doctrine and decrees by the Ministry of Religious Affairs prohibiting the politicization of religious teaching and preaching, student activists faced government repression as part of a heavy-handed policy euphemistically referred to as the 'Normalization of Campus Life' (*normalisasi kehidupan kampus*, NKK).<sup>145</sup> In spite of this setback, the DDII managed to provide Islamist student activists with an infrastructure for their activities. Even as 'the methods of the radical faction of HMI led by Imaduddin gave way, on the one hand, to the moderate wing of Nurcholish Madjid', campus mosques continued to play a central role as nodal points for a new type of network inspired by the underground, cell-like structure pioneered by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>146</sup> The study circles (*halaqah*) through which Islamic education and training or *tarbiyah* had been dispensed so far were now turned into so-called *usroh*: family-like mini-communities of dedicated propagandists. Thus the government's repressive NKK unwittingly contributed to the emergence of a highly effective semi-clandestine network of Islamist activism.

The disciplinarian *usroh* approach, with its emphasis on exemplary personal conduct, was more appealing to 'abangan neophytes' than students who came from families that were already pious Muslims.<sup>147</sup> By turning young Indonesians into 'good Muslims', the DDII and its youth wing showed themselves very critical of both the Muhammadiyah and NU. Because of this particular organizational model, the composite elements of the *tarbiyah* movement had acquired a sect-like character, while its ideological positions became increasingly defined along sectarian lines, as evinced by the type of publications it disseminated.<sup>148</sup> Assisted by DDII's access to sympathetic mass media and publishing houses, from the 1980s onwards a new body of Islamic literature, in particular texts of a Salafi signature, became widely available in Indonesian translations.<sup>149</sup> Thanks to Muhammad Natsir's reputation in neighbouring Malaysia, his role in the Karachi-based World Islamic

Congress and his involvement in establishing the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League, DDII was also able to tap into a very useful network of international contacts and relations. Among others, it was put in charge of distributing scholarships enabling Indonesian students to attend universities in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Pakistan's *Jama'ah Tabligh*, the Jordanian-Palestinian *Hizbut Tahrir*, Malaysia's *Darul Arqam* and the Saudi government—through its sponsorship of LIPIA and the opening of a branch of Muhammad ibn Saud University—all established a presence in Indonesia itself as well.<sup>150</sup> To the detriment of the HMI, Imaduddin Abdulrahim's Indonesian approach was thus replaced by a distinctly internationalist and increasingly re-politicized Islamic discourse.<sup>151</sup> By the mid-1990s the Campus Dakwah Institutes (*Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*, LDK) were able to translate their influence into political capital as they managed to get their preferred candidates elected to university senates.<sup>152</sup>

And yet, against the background of the New Order's curious mix of political repression and reaching out to new allies, in Yudi Latif's estimation the *dakwah* and *tarbiyah* milieu found itself in a similar marginal position as the renewal thinkers—forming 'the "new edge" of the Muslim community'—on the opposite side of the Islamic discursive spectrum.<sup>153</sup> He also notes that the *dakwah* and *pembaruan* Movements' involvement in Islamizing the secular academic community and government bureaucracy and polity respectively created a short-lived synergy that opened up the way for such different intellectuals as Dawam Rahardjo and Imaduddin Abdulrahim to throw their joint weight behind the incubation of ICMI. Together with the plethora of NGOs and smaller think tanks, ICMI was a crucial component in the emergence of the new discursive space where the *dakwah* and *pembaruan* Movements could meet and discover a common ground for what Latif calls the 'development of the "Third Way" Movement'.<sup>154</sup> However, the concrete agendas of these unlikely interlocutors were very different, with little agreement as to the direction of this alternative route. Intellectuals like Rahardjo were looking at the creative possibilities offered by the Islamic heritage for building an Indonesian future; a forward-looking attitude that can justifiably be referred to as progressive. *Dakwah* intellectuals respond differently to this challenge. Historical experience continues to color their impressions of government policy in negative terms; their perception of Islam as being under

threat has created a siege mentality in which windows of opportunity also direct the view toward the Islamic heritage, except that it is regressive in a temporal sense—a response that must be considered reactive and reactionary rather than creative. For this reason Yudi Latif's characterization of *dakwah* activists and advocates of similar political religions agenda as 'reactionary Islamists' seems not inaccurate.<sup>155</sup>

DDII's infrastructure also formed the seedbed for the emergence of two powerful satellite organizations. Paradoxically, these include both the United Front of Indonesian Muslim University Students (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*, KAMMI), founded at the Muhammadiyah University of Malang in 1998, which was instrumental in ousting General Suharto from power and quickly transformed into a non-violent pro-democracy movement, as well as the earlier mentioned Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World (KISDI), which was willing to resort to violence to defend the interests of its New Order military patrons.<sup>156</sup> KISDI was initially founded in 1987 to draw attention to the global plight of Muslims, canvassing support for Islamic causes in Palestine, Kashmir and Bosnia. Later it also mobilized opinion against the US-led operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm against Iraq in 1990 and 1991. Established with support from Natsir himself, the committee's leader was Ahmad Sumargono (b.1943) who made KISDI a political ally of Prabowo Subianto and became a member of parliament for the PBB.<sup>157</sup>

A key figure in this organization, who has developed into one of the most articulate detractors of the progressive and freethinking intellectuals featuring in this book, is Adian Husaini. Educated at various Islamic schools and at LIPIA, Husaini was originally trained as a veterinarian at Bogor's IPB—after ITB one of the most important centers of the *Tarbiya* movement. He then went on to study international relations at Jakarta's Jayabaya University and politics at Universitas Indonesia, eventually obtaining a PhD from the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur, which has since been absorbed into the International Islamic University Malaysia. After working as a journalist for newspapers such as ICMI's *Republika*, over the past decade he has become one of the most prolific writers and public commentators on Islamic trends in Indonesia, criticizing what he calls liberal Islam which is subverting the faith. He is also involved in a small NGO called INSISTS, set up to spread to views of ISTAC in Indonesia. Since then he has grown into one of the most prominent exponents of reac-

tionary Islamic discourse in Indonesia. Holding positions not only in DDII but in the Muhammadiyah as well since its conservative turn in 2005, he currently also holds an academic position as director of the doctoral program in education at Bogor's Ibn Khaldun University.<sup>158</sup> Another important platform from where Husaini ventilates his diatribes is the Saudi-sponsored Institute for the Research and Teaching of Islam (*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam*, LPPI), which is one of the most important Salafi think tanks directed against what they call 'deviant Islam' (*Islam sesat*). Established by Mohammed Amin Djamaluddin (b.1950), it is not so much an internationalist Salafi as a conservative Indonesian Muslim organization. Considered as one of the more intellectually rigorous think tanks, combining literal readings of Islam's scriptures with rationalist interpretations, its historical justifications also draw heavily on the Masyumi heritage.<sup>159</sup>

That is certainly not the case with Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). As part of the transnational Hizbut Tahrir network, HTI advocates the restoration of the historical caliphate as the appropriate polity for reuniting the global Islamic community, or *umma*, and as a general panacea for all the problems that are currently affecting the Muslim world. The ideas of Hizbut Tahrir began making its first inroads during 1980s at IPB Bogor, but it was only with the opening up of the political arena in the early *Reformasi* years that its influence began to expand further. A decade later, in 2009, its first nationwide congress attracted five thousand participants. Claiming the support of hundreds of thousands, researchers think it safe to assume that its actual membership runs in the tens of thousands.<sup>160</sup> As elsewhere, HTI partisans distinguish themselves by impressive intellectual credentials and formidable debating skills. Among the most important interlocutors and detractors of liberal Islam are Farid Wadji (b.1971), an international relations graduate from Bandung's Padjadjaran University (UNPAD), and Shiddiq al-Jawi (pen name of Sigit Purnawan Jati, b.1969), who started out as an activist in IPB's Al-Ghifari mosque. Other prominent figures include HTI's general spokesman Ismail Yusanto (b.1962), Rokhmat S. Labib (b.1971), Hafidz Abdurrahman (b.1971) and Fahmi Amhar (b.1968), an Austrian-educated engineer and professor of spatial information systems in Bogor. The latter's NU background and position as a lecturer at Paramadina University make him a rather exceptional individual within HTI.<sup>161</sup>

Finally, as illustrated by the case of JIMM and the political misfortunes of Masdar Mas'udi and Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, opposition and rejection of perceived innovative intellectual Islamic discourses can also come from within large organizations such as the Muhammadiyah and the NU. As I have argued earlier, these are not monolithic bodies; rather they form reservoirs of varying, even conflicting, strands of Islamic thinking. In his discussion of the rivalry between liberal and conservative discourses within the Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Najib Burhani draws attention to the fact that PKS activists with *tarbiyah* backgrounds successfully infiltrated Muhammadiyah mosque administrations, schools and university campuses. On the one hand, this contributed to the hostility exhibited within the Muhammadiyah towards initiatives like JIMM and the use of tendentious jargon, such as renaming the JIMM into 'Network of Young Muhammadiyah Devils' (*Jaringan Iblis Muda Muhammadiyah*).<sup>162</sup> On the other hand, it also led to a surprising response in which Muhammadiyah conservatives and liberals banded together against unspecified 'external forces'. Moreover, in contrast to the 2005 Muhammadiyah Congress, the 2010 meeting distinguished itself by an apparently conscious display of specifically Indonesian cultural features and performances, evidently endorsed by the organization's top leadership.<sup>163</sup> Such an explicit rejection of overly puritan tendencies clearly shows that the battle between progressive and reactionary elements within the Muslim segment of the Indonesian population is far from over.

*Progressive Muslim intellectuals in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Indonesia: not traditionalist or modernist, neither secular nor Islamist*

The level of detail provided in this chapter's mapping of old and new organizational entities, and the profile sketches of the intellectuals involved in the formulation of new ways of Islamic thinking, is intended to emphasize the increasingly multi-layered complexity of discourse and identity-formation among Indonesia's Muslims at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It challenges the conclusion of Karel Steenbrink, a veteran observer of Islamic education in Indonesia. A few years ago he noted that, from the early twentieth century onwards, what mattered was not so much the divide running between traditionalists and reformists, 'between "traditional Mecca" and "mod-

ern Cairo”, but between those who also received a secular Western education and those who devoted their youth to religious studies, either in Indonesia or in Mecca, Cairo, or elsewhere’.<sup>164</sup> At the beginning of the twenty-first century, I think that is no longer true. Growing numbers of young Muslims from pious backgrounds opting for an academic specialization in religious studies have also received a mixed education: attending state schools and (reformed) *pesantren*; enrolling in both Islamic and secular universities; travelling abroad for advanced degrees in the study of religion, Islamic history, and even the social sciences from universities in North America, Australia and Europe, just as much as going to Muslim countries for more traditional qualifications in Islamic studies.

The profile sketches provided in this chapter show that cultural hybridity remains a key characteristic in the identity-formation of contemporary Muslim intellectuals. Rather than hybridity being a criticism, it is a quality proving to be an asset when it comes to exploring Islamic variants of freethinking and the conceptualization of new ideas. These exercises take place through critical conversation with the work of their intellectual predecessors, including their immediate Indonesian mentors as well as interlocutors from the outside, both Muslim and non-Muslim. It also offers an opportunity to test to what extent they have turned the intellectual trade into what Robbins calls ‘secular vocations’. With the passing of Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, Kuntowijoyo and Moeslim Abdurrahman, those who created ‘big bang’ ideas may be gone, but younger generations continue to explore and critically engage with these concepts and notions. Some members of the Paramadina Youth Forum acknowledge that their intellectual predecessors have left them with a legacy of ‘monuments’.<sup>165</sup> However, there is a—probably intentional—ambiguity to this characterization. Is it to be read as a reference to ideas that are monumental in their impact? Or are they mere relics of the past, unless they are regularly refreshed and given new value under constantly changing circumstances?





## THE WEIGHT OF THE PREDECESSORS

### ADAPTATION, CRITIQUE AND TRANSFORMATION

In the highly charged atmosphere of the early *Reformasi* years, it should not come as a surprise that, initially, Muslim intellectuals too were very much focussed on political issues. Like everybody else, they were caught up in the enthusiasm surrounding the transition from authoritarian New Order towards democracy inaugurated by the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid, who was after all one of the key inspirers of the new Islamic discursive formations which these upcoming scholars and activists were now helping to elaborate and translate into plans of action. However, within a few years much of the original optimism had evaporated. By then Gus Dur had been impeached and his immediate successor Megawati Sukarnoputri replaced by a former military officer who had made his career under the New Order Regime.

Thus by 2005, Indonesia faced some new pertinent questions. Was it experiencing a moment of *déjà vu*; a return to the situation before *Reformasi*? Or would it make a decisive move from the transitory period of regime change into the consolidation phase of democratization? Generally such a shift occurs between five and seven years into the process. In the case of Indonesia it also triggered a change in the preoccupations of young Muslim intellectuals. Instead of predominantly busying themselves with political events, they became more interested in fundamental philosophical questions. As the first compre-

hensive studies of the epistemological dimensions of the relation between knowledge and power by Indonesian Muslims begin to appear around the same time, it can be argued that 2005–6 forms not just a watershed year in Indonesian politics, but must also be regarded as a critical juncture in its recent intellectual history.

The dependency of this type of critical Islamic thinking in Indonesia on certain intellectuals from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia shows that interactions between different parts of the Muslim world are not only important for explaining the global spread of Islamism, but also for a proper understanding of its counter-narratives. Arab Muslim intellectuals whose writings stir controversy, such as Mohammed Arkoun, Hasan Hanafi, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, have been instrumental for challenging the Islamist reification of *al-salaf al-salih*, or ‘the pious ancestors’, as the unassailable authority figures of so-called authentic or pure Islam, and for calling into question the received accounts of the formative period of Islam’s civilizational heritage or *turath*. Tracing these trans-regional contacts will also show that ideas derived from contemporary Western thought are not always transmitted directly, but often reached Indonesia via detours passing through other parts of the Muslim world. The resulting map of intellectual connections is reflective of the notion of ‘the circulation of ideas’ which guided South Asianists in developing the field of Indian Ocean studies as a new type of trans-regional area studies, as well as the idea of a ‘travelling theory’ by the literary critic Edward Said.<sup>1</sup>

This points to the realization that all thinking is relational. It does not develop in isolation or in a vacuum, but in specific contexts and through dialogue. Aside from outside stimulation, counter-narratives and new ideas capable of subverting dominant accounts also can only take off and flourish when they are contrasted with preceding ones. Therefore, the reputations of Indonesia’s second- and third-generation Muslim intellectuals are partly built on critical engagement with their precursors, who often had acted as their mentors. This chapter’s survey of these critiques will not just highlight contrasts in thinking between one generation and another, it will also help identify topics that will be unpacked in subsequent chapters where the discussion will focus on the questions confronting Indonesia’s Muslims now and in the future, and how they tackle these issues and cope with conflicting views through constructive engagement.

## THE WEIGHT OF THE PREDECESSORS

As early as 1987, in a book called *Clearing a New Islamic Road*, Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy distinguished four emerging patterns of 'post-renewal thinking' that feature in these critiques. These are not mutually exclusive strands of thought, meaning that the demarcations are often fuzzy and that participating individuals can fit into more than one category.<sup>2</sup> As members of the Ciputat School, Ali and Effendy's main concern was the innovative thinking of Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. Generally referred to as Islamic 'neo-modernism', it differs from what Fazlur Rahman calls 'classical modernism' in terms of adopting a more inclusive and appreciative attitude towards the Islamic tradition.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Ali and Effendy argue that the postulate 'keeping from the old what is good, taking from the new what is better' was actually used to combat this earlier strand of Islamic modernism, which continues to be represented in Indonesia by the Muhammadiyah's puritan stream. While emphasizing the compatibility of Islam with reason, it rejects most of the Islamic tradition for having in effect 'stopped the Muslim community from thinking'.<sup>4</sup> A third strand, also with links to the Muhammadiyah and characterized by the authors as 'socialist-democratic', is what later becomes the transformative Islam of Dawam Rahardjo and Moeslim Abdurrahman. While Ali and Effendy, and later also Zuly Qodir, include Kuntowijoyo in this category as well, Budhy Munawar-Rachman argues that the latter's concept of cultural Islam is closer to the notion of civilizational Islam developed by Nurcholish Madjid during his post-renewal period.<sup>5</sup> This line of thought interprets the principles of the Pancasila as transformative values with a direct relevance to the real-life questions of modern human existence and little concern for the formal aspects of Islamic doctrine.<sup>6</sup> That can definitely not be said of the fourth main strand of post-renewal thinking, which Ali and Effendy call 'Islamic internationalism or universalism'. Writing in the mid-1980s, they included not only intellectuals such as Imaduddin Abdulrahim, Endang Saefudin Anshari and A. M. Saefuddin (b.1940), but also the early Amien Rais and Jalaludin Rakhmat (b.1949), two thinker-activists who in their later years would develop more pluralist outlooks.<sup>7</sup> In current jargon, this line of thinking would now be qualified as reactionary Islamist, and many antagonists featuring in the present book issue from this.

As followers of Nurcholish Madjid, Ali and Effendy are partisan to neo-modernism, presenting it as the most sophisticated offspring from

earlier renewal or *pembaruan* thinking. However, the conflation of the ideas expressed by Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid under the same header has been challenged by younger Muslim intellectuals from traditionalist backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> One of the first to signal this discrepancy was Yudian Wahyudi, but the most articulate critics of Nurcholish Madjid came from the *anak muda* NU. The analytical aptitudes of these young interlocutors were often more incisive than earlier assessments by academics of the Ciputat School and other associates of Nurcholish Madjid: 'If Islamic neo-modernism is understood to navigate between modernism and revivalism, then Islamic post-traditionalism must be understood as a movement that leaps beyond tradition', Ahmad Riyadi observed.<sup>9</sup> As the new 'masters of suspicion', the *anak muda* NU who developed the discourse of Islamic post-traditionalism challenged Nurcholish Madjid's uncritical engagement with the dominant narratives that are said to make up the Islamic tradition; implying that his unquestioned acceptance of what Mohammed Arkoun used to call the Officially Closed Text Corpus of Islamic historiography can be transposed to the political attitudes during his later years. The Islamic post-traditionalists profess a preference for Abdurrahman Wahid's way of thinking. Meanwhile, third-generation Muslim intellectuals associated with Nurcholish Madjid's Paramadina Foundation take a cynical view of Abdurrahman Wahid's ambiguous politics and the mercurial side of his character after ascending to the presidency. As custodians of Madjid's intellectual heritage they express some very valid reservations concerning Abdurrahman Wahid's political opaqueness.

Both instances reflect a sense of frustration with the continuing grip of the elites on state power in the *Reformasi* era. After all, both Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid transformed their earlier anti-hegemonic and adversarial narratives into dominant discourses. While, in the 1990s, the former became quite close to the upper echelons of the New Order, Abdurrahman Wahid was seduced by the prospect of political office when another supposedly progressive Muslim intellectual, Amien Rais, made common cause with religious conservatives in the NU to frustrate Megawati Sukarnoputri's chances of being head of state. In the language of Zygmunt Bauman, rather than dedicating themselves to the roles of interpreters or translators between religious and political cultures, they decided to become legislators in their own right. This chapter will explore the criticisms formulated by

younger intellectuals in their attempts to avoid that trap by finding alternative trajectories.

*Rethinking and redefining the concept of Ahlussunnah wal-Jama'ah*

NU Partisans in present-day Indonesia still self-identify as local representatives of the *Ahlussunnah wal-Jama'ah*. The term is derived from *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*, or 'the People of the Tradition and Community'.<sup>10</sup> In Indonesian often abbreviated to '*Aswaja*', this claim comes with the caveat that the notion is subject to continuous interpretation, an exercise known in the Islamic tradition as *ijtihad*. Redefining the notion of *Aswaja* has become a primary concern for postcolonial generations of progressive-minded intellectuals from traditionalist Islamic backgrounds in order to ensure the notion's present and future relevance. In fact, even the NU's original understanding of *Aswaja* was already a modification of the broader notion of *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a* as it had historically evolved in Arab Islamic thinking about religion.<sup>11</sup> The Indonesian variant is grounded in three fundamental doctrines covering the key domains of Islamic learning that connect today's traditionalists with their historical precursors through local lines of transmission.<sup>12</sup> Their juridical affiliation is with the school traced back to al-Shafi'i (d.820), while in dealing with theological questions they follow the scholars al-Ash'ari (d.936) and al-Maturidi (d.944). Finally, for their spiritual needs they subscribe to the interpretations of Sufism by al-Junayd al-Baghdadi (d.910) and al-Ghazali (d.1111).

Taken together, also for contemporary traditionalist Muslims, this triad continues to form a corridor towards a moderate doctrinal paradigm.<sup>13</sup> It is important to be aware of the difference between these interpretations and the counter-claim from Salafis, such as the FKAW, to be representative of the true *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*.<sup>14</sup> The latter insist on a much narrower reading grounded in close adherence to the example set by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. As will become clear in a later chapter, the same applies to their view of Medinan society at the beginning of the Islamic era, which is also markedly different from the understanding held by the likes of Nurcholish Madjid who took the Medina Charter—the covenant between Muhammad's community and the local Arab and Jewish tribes—as a blueprint for pluralism, political inclusiveness and religious tolerance.

Almost coinciding with the NU's decision in the early 1980s to return to the precepts of its founding document, or *Khittah 1926*, the then head of its consultative council, Ahmad Siddiq (1926–91), proposed a more open rereading of *Aswaja* which was also supported by the new executive general chairman, Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>15</sup> The discussions revolved around how *Aswaja* should be understood as the *umma wasat*, or 'middle community' within the wider global Muslim community. It was closely tied up with a theological and juridical interpretation of Islam advocating *al-tawassut wa al-i'tidal*, or 'moderation and justice', identifying balance (*tawazun*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*) as cardinal virtues associated with such a disposition. The proponents of this reading suggest interpreting *Aswaja* as offering a suitable 'middle path' (*jalan tengah*) for the present time and age between the extremes of what in the 1980s was referred to as religious fundamentalism and liberalism.<sup>16</sup> Stressing its hermeneutical and methodological dimensions, for Siddiq this exercise in *ijtihad* meant striking a balance between transmitted revealed knowledge (*naql*) and human reason (*'aql*), captured in the adage that also attracted post-renewal thinkers such as the mature Nurcholish Madjid to the Islamic tradition, and which encourages preserving the good aspects of the tradition and adopting better alternatives from modern thinking.<sup>17</sup>

For Abdurrahman Wahid, one of the greatest defects of conventional Islamic modernism was the loss of the spiritual aspects of religion. This continued to be an important reason not just for defending traditional Islamic learning in law and theology, but in particular its Ghazalian accounts of Sufism.<sup>18</sup> In his estimation, the dismissal of Sufism by modernist Muslims as archaic and obsolete actually undermines the moral compass provided by the integrity of the triad of traditional Islamic learning. Such a disintegration of religious life would lead to indifference on the part of religious institutions to supposedly 'non-religious' aspects of human life and eventually result in a dichotomy that effectively disrupts the correlative framework which constitutes the fullness of human life that *Aswaja* seek to preserve. The atrophy of such a religious outlook must be offset by retaining a dynamic perspective, reflected in a concern for perpetual human issues such as poverty and injustice. As an Islamic analogy to modern-day Catholic Liberation Theology from Latin America, Wahid sees *Aswaja* as an earlier instance of fulfilling a similar agenda for social justice through a process of internalization and socialization developing out of the interac-

tion with other Islamic but also non-Islamic elements that suffuse its doctrines with the ‘universal spirit of humanity’.<sup>19</sup> It also offers an insight into how Abdurrahman Wahid’s interpretation of *Aswaja* is shaped by his familiarity with the intellectual world outside his own traditionalist Islamic milieu. To him the *Aswaja* are the custodians of a tradition storing the accumulated and integrated knowledge needed for a balanced human life, in both its this- and other-worldly dimensions, without hindering the freedom of human creativity. Accordingly, Ali and Effendy have qualified Abdurrahman Wahid’s understanding of *Aswaja* as a form of ‘intellectual improvisation’ that reinvents itself in accordance with changing historical circumstances.<sup>20</sup>

The New *Ulama* who came after Siddiq and Wahid continued to grapple with the idea of *Aswaja*. In 1995, the NU’s senior leadership passed a resolution calling for a kind of handbook on the notion of *Aswaja*, which would present a systematic formulation of the meaning of the term. Two years later, the NU’s future chairman, Said Aqil Siraj, released a book called *Ahlussunah wal Jama’ah throughout History*, which has since been regarded as the defining document of the NU’s new understanding of *Aswaja*.<sup>21</sup> Sharing Siddiq’s epistemological and hermeneutical concerns, Siraj describes the *Aswaja* approach as *taqlid manhaj*, or ‘methodological imitation’, which differs markedly from the accusations of blind imitation leveled by modernist Islamic reformers against the traditionalists. He argues that his book reduces the differences between reformist interpretations and traditionalist understandings of *taqlid* to ‘terminological misunderstandings’, rather than insurmountable substantive disagreements.<sup>22</sup> Here we have an evident instance of a blurring of the lines between traditionalist and modernist positions which—as claimed in the previous chapter—is a key feature of contemporary Islamic thinking in Indonesia. Obviously, Siraj’s interpretation is not supported along the whole spectrum of the NU. However, in his preface to the book, Abdurrahman Wahid supported the call for more openness to a plurality of interpretations by invoking the Prophet’s statement that ‘differences of opinion within the Muslim community should be viewed as a blessing (*ikhhtilāf al-umma, rahma*)’.<sup>23</sup> Siraj’s understanding of the term *manhaj* or method stands in stark contrast to the use of the same term by the likes of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb, or Indonesian Islamists inspired by his thought. Their interpretations present a totalizing and fixed worldview informed by

literal readings of the Qur'an and Hadith, referred to as either '*Manhaj Ahlu al-Hadits*' or '*Manhaj Salafi*'.<sup>24</sup>

This unwavering commitment to methodologically rigorous interpretation also extends to the Islamic post-traditionalists of the next generation of young NU cadres. In 1997, the same year that Sira's handbook came out, the inaugural issue of what would become the key periodical of Islamic post-traditionalism, *Tashwirul Afkar*, was also dedicated to a reinterpretation of the notion of *Aswaja*. It included contributions from senior Muslim intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid, Mustofa Bisri, Sahal Mahfudh and Said Aqil Siraj himself.<sup>25</sup> Almost a decade later, when Rumadi completed his doctoral dissertation on the *Komunitas Postra* or 'Postra Community', and Ahmad Baso published his *NU Studies*, they too revisited the concept of *Aswaja* in what can be considered the two most comprehensive monographs on Islamic post-traditionalism that have appeared to date.<sup>26</sup>

Invoking the earlier mentioned maxim of 'preserving from the old what is good and taking from the new what is better', Rumadi reaffirms that the NU's identification with the integral *Aswaja* approach stands in stark contrast to the discontinuity which characterizes the Muhammadiyah's intellectual trajectory. He criticizes its heavy reliance on Salafi thought found in the writings of Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328), as well as later reformers such as Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703/1792), Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–97) and Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905). Taken together with another observation by Rumadi, in which he views the entirety of Islam's storehouse of religious traditions as 'the NU's extraordinary cultural-intellectual capital for engaging in a dialectics with modernity', this alternative view of Islamic reformism echoes Abdurahman Wahid's diagnosis of its shortcomings.<sup>27</sup> Retracing the origins of this interpretation of *Aswaja*, Rumadi also stresses that Islam only arrived in South East Asia after the formative period of classical religious thinking had ended, and that the integration of sophisticated theological aspects into the region's rich local cultural–religious setting, which had already merged indigenous practices and beliefs with earlier absorbed and adapted Hindu–Buddhist elements from South Asia, was part of that dialectical process, making Islam a religion which was experienced by its adherents as truly historicized, even if they did not articulate that specifically.<sup>28</sup>

While emphasizing the integrity of *Aswaja* as the basis of NU intellectualism, Rumadi notes that theology, jurisprudence and Sufism do



not carry the same weight within the traditionalist ‘trilogy of religious knowledge’, nor are they equal in terms of openness to a plurality of views. Discursive theology or *kalam* came to Indonesia in its elaborated Ash‘ari version. For this reason, and because of its theocentric focus—as opposed to the more practical or worldly concerns of jurisprudence (*fiqh*)—it never developed the same dynamism as juridical thinking.<sup>29</sup> Although Ash‘arism’s rich theological heritage was integrated into the local cultural–religious setting through the dialectical processes and intellectual exchanges, Rumadi sees it not so much as a productive undertaking as one of conservation. What is more, the ideological dimensions of what eventually became a ‘process of orthodoxy’ suppressed elements of Mu‘tazili and Shi‘i thinking, each of which were more philosophically inclined, thus resulting in a rejection of pluralist theological thought.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, this *fiqhi* or jurisprudential way of thinking was definitely more tolerant of pluralism than theology, and Rumadi qualifies *fiqh* as the defining hallmark of the NU identity that sets it apart from other Muslim communities in Indonesia. Both in intellectual and political terms, the NU’s *raison d’être* is grounded in jurisprudential thinking, and its ‘importance in NU culture surpasses theology and Sufism’ in relative significance.<sup>31</sup> Because *fiqh* deals with aspects of daily life, it has a long history of tolerance on both cultural and political levels. However, in Rumadi’s estimation, ‘the development of the NU’s *fiqh* is not so much connected with the Southeast Asian tradition as that it reflects an acceptance of jurisprudence as it had evolved in the Middle East’.<sup>32</sup>

As yet another example of the rapprochement between traditionalists and modernists, the young Muhammadiyah intellectual Ahmad Najib Burhani has also pointed to Abdurrahman Wahid’s emphasis on *fiqh* as the very definition of NU thinking.<sup>33</sup>

One aspect that Burhani doesn’t mention, but which Rumadi emphatically stresses several times, is the way the NU interpretation of *Aswaja* tries to ‘harmonize shari‘ah and Sufism’—a characteristic he traces back to the influential Gujarati-born but Aceh-based jurist Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d.1658), as well as the native Sumatran religious polymath Abd al-Ra‘uf al-Sinkili (d.1693), who ‘wanted to reconcile *zahir* (exterior) and *batin* (interior) knowledge’.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, NU circles have adopted a moderate understanding of Sufism, informed by the work of al-Junayd and al-Ghazali on which later religious scholars have continued to build, and which is sometimes referred to as neo-Sufism. It pre-

scribes a spiritual practice toned down by observance of Islamic law and an orientation towards the deeper truths (*haqiqa*), implying that both aspects are 'two sides of the same coin'.<sup>35</sup> Rumadi refers to al-Ghazali's monumental *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, or *The Revivification of the Religious Sciences*, as the seminal example of 'giving an esoteric charge to the exoteric rulings of jurisprudence [by] synthesizing the formalism of fiqh and substantivism of heterodox Sufism'.<sup>36</sup>

The centrality of *fiqh* within the NU milieu continues until the present day and therefore, says Rumadi, it is 'no exaggeration to say that the character of NU intellectualism is very much '*fiqh oriented*'.<sup>37</sup> How this has affected the NU's position on the place of Islamic law in contemporary Indonesia will be further explored in the chapter on Islamic law. At present suffice it to note that, also for the Islamic post-traditionalists, *Aswaja* not only continues to hold validity for giving the NU's intellectual tradition its ideological underpinnings; it also still determines the very identity of the NU.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, however, and in line with their stance against hegemonic interpretations of Islam, both Rumadi and Baso consistently argue that the postra community seeks to 'decentre' *Aswaja* by interpreting it anew through a rewriting or rereading of the way it had become the NU's ideology.<sup>39</sup> Building on its new meaning as a *manhaj al-fikr*, or methodology or mode of thinking, that had already been given to *Aswaja* by Said Aqil Siraj, Rumadi wants to restore its 'elasticity' by readdressing the problematic of that part of the earlier cited maxim which deals with 'what is better from the new'.<sup>40</sup> To his mind, this offers a better articulated response to contemporary external challenges such as the recognition of religious pluralism, democratization and human rights.

Since, as we have seen, the theological component of the *Aswaja* doctrine lags behind jurisprudence and Sufism in terms of responsiveness to change, Rumadi focuses his reinterpretation efforts on the domain of theology which needs to be weaned off its theocentrism and transformed into a 'theology of humanity'.<sup>41</sup> Fully aware that this sounds not only contradictory, but that it will be very difficult to instill a social and humanist vision into *Aswaja*'s venerable theological tradition, Rumadi appeals to the book *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism* by the South African Muslim Liberation Theologian Farid Esack. By 'humanizing theology and theologizing humankind', Rumadi does not envisage replacing old Sunni theology with a new one, but aims to introduce a 'social perspective into theological beliefs'.<sup>42</sup> For progres-

sive young NU members, this means revisiting Sunni theological and Sufi doctrines, and questioning the conflation of the very different ideas held by al-Ash'ari and al-Maturidi and by al-Junayd and al-Ghazali respectively, as well as resolving the differences between al-Junayd and al-Ghazali.

According to Rumadi, it was theology's historical preoccupation with sectarianism that had sapped its energies and prevented it from dealing with contemporary human issues. Mainly preoccupied with theocentric issues such as the nature and qualities of God, the classical theologians had deferred practical questions related to jurisprudence, ethics and Sufism. To back up this statement, Rumadi refers to the writings of the Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi, who commented that classical theology's subordination of humanity is responsible for creating a psychological condition in the collective Muslim psyche that is characterized by narrow-mindedness and backwardness, rendering it helpless without divine intervention. For the same reasons, Sunni theology has interpreted the principles of moderation, balance and justice in terms of compromise, that is to say: navigating between extreme theological and philosophical positions of what Hasan Hanafi calls the right and the left. Qualifying present-day NU intellectuals as heirs to 'this treasury of Islamic thinking' and as 'victims of history', for Rumadi the key question is how present-day Muslims, who are so far removed from the formative period of this theology, can transform such a God-centered way of thinking.<sup>43</sup> Critically-minded young NU cadres are experiencing firsthand how difficult it is to get out of that mindset, especially when—as history has shown—politics or the state are getting caught up in such theological controversies. Based on his initial observation that *Aswaja* theological thinking must become more responsive to human issues, Rumadi contends that this requires a structural change—nothing short of a paradigm shift—by reconceptualizing *Aswaja* as a mode of thinking about religion, along the lines proposed by Abdurrahman Wahid and Said Aqil Siraj, rather than a historical school of thought.<sup>44</sup>

Ahmad Baso interrogates the meaning of *Aswaja*, in one of the chapters of *NU Studies* entitled 'The NU rewrites the history of "truth" of *Aswaja*', where he examines what Foucault called 'the political history of the production of truth' in order to establish how the resulting truth regimes monopolize the means for producing culture.<sup>45</sup> This enabled religious authority figures to lay claim to the only valid interpretation

of a doctrine and establish orthodoxies. He also introduces Castoriadis' concept of 'social imaginary' to sketch how *Aswaja* originated from a political group during the *fitna* or 'chaos'—a state of virtual civil war that had erupted as a result of early disputes about the succession of Muhammad. They isolated themselves from the conflict between the Umayyad caliphs and the rivalling opposition movements of Shi'ites and Kharijites by withdrawing into scholarship and the practice of personal piety. Using Said Aqil Siraj's reinterpretation of *Aswaja*, Ahmad Baso singles out the pious Hasan al-Basri (d.728)—who stands at the beginning of many Islamic theological and mystical traditions—as the emblematic figure in this moderate and independent segment of the Muslim community that eventually managed to become a political force in its own right by defying the caliphate through knowledge and acts of worship.<sup>46</sup> Also during the Abbasid Caliphate, this community remained dedicated to learning and good works, holding on to the same middle ground in later theological and philosophical debates between the rationalist school of the Mu'tazila and literal scripturalists around Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.855), which they had earlier occupied in the political disputes between Umayyad *realpolitik*, the mythologized imamate of the Shi'ites, and ideological zealotry of the Kharijites.<sup>47</sup>

When the political polarization of these religious debates during the so-called ninth-century *Mihna* or 'Inquisition' had died down, the *Ahl al-Sunna*, as self-proclaimed custodians of the traditions of the Prophet, together with the jurists, managed to move from the intellectual fringes of Muslim society to the center of political power. This was largely due to the efforts of al-Ash'ari, who synthesized Ibn Hanbal's interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunna with al-Shafi'i's use of consensus among the scholars (*ijma'*) and analogous reasoning (*qiyas*) in resolving legal questions. As the *imam al-mutakallimin*, or 'principal theologian', al-Ash'ari set in motion a process that eventually pushed scholars of the Hanbali school out of the *Aswaja* circle and marginalized Mu'tazili rationalism in favor of a closely circumscribed use of human reason in theology. According to Baso, scholarly 'concentration on study and worship meant focusing on achieving dominance and power, thus making the religious scholars all of a sudden achieve significant power in the social-political arena'. It led to a merger of what al-Ghazali had called the "*nizham ad-dunya*" and "*nizham ad-din*"—the worldly and religious systems.<sup>48</sup>

Aside from a nod to Siraj in *NU Studies*, six years earlier, Baso also opened his introduction to the translation of texts by Muhammad

Abid al-Jabiri with an acknowledgement of his debt to the future NU chairman for introducing him to this Moroccan philosopher.<sup>49</sup> At the time of writing, al-Jabiri was still virtually unknown in Indonesia, but Siraj had obtained his writings and made a study of his ideas. He applied what he had learned to his own alternative interpretation of *Aswaja* as an epistemological method (*manhaj*) rather than a historical school (*mazhab*).<sup>50</sup> In order to be able to make sense of the ways in which young NU cadres have continued to develop this ‘*manhaji*’ approach as part of their own epistemological concerns, it will be necessary to digress into an exploration of al-Jabiri’s thought and the ideas of some other representatives of present-day Arab–Islamic thinking, as well as certain elements of contemporary Western philosophy, which have been put to use to formulate Islamic post-traditionalism.

### *Circulation of ideas and travelling theory*

To be sure, intellectuals of the second and third postcolonial generations are not uniform in their use or appreciation of thinkers such as al-Jabiri, Abu Zayd, Arkoun and Hanafi. The NU’s Said Aqil Siraj relied on al-Jabiri to write his handbook on *Aswaja*, whereas a senior Muhammadiyah figure like philosophy professor Amin Abdullah found him inspirational for a thematic exegesis of the Qur’an and for his new blueprint for researching and teaching Islam in Indonesian higher education. Meanwhile his colleague at UIN Yogyakarta, Yudian Wahyudi, made a comparative study of Hasan Hanafi, al-Jabiri and Nurcholish Madjid at McGill University in Canada. However, he turned the Egyptian philosopher Hanafi—rather than al-Jabiri—into the benchmark because of his articulate ideas on methodological rigor.<sup>51</sup> As a professor of the philosophy of law, Wahyudi is particularly interested in Hanafi’s transformation of the discipline of *usul al-fiqh* (foundations of jurisprudence) into a philosophical hermeneutics—a topic that will be taken up again in the chapter on Islamic law.<sup>52</sup> For Islamic post-traditionalists the reading of these thinkers informs the discourse critiques they have directed at previous generations of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, challenging them for not having gone far enough in terms of critical engagement with Islam’s civilizational heritage or *turath*. In developing their own anti-hegemonic rereadings of this heritage, Rumadi relies primarily on the French–Algerian historian Mohammed Arkoun, while Baso prefers al-Jabiri.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to Yudian Wahyudi, Baso dismissed the thought of al-Jabiri's Egyptian counterpart Hanafi as too instrumentalist.<sup>54</sup>

All considered, al-Jabiri seems to have more resonance with intellectuals from NU backgrounds than with Muhammadiyah-affiliated cadres. According to Burhani this is because modernist intellectuals are not as preoccupied with the Islamic tradition as their traditionalist counterparts. Therefore they find less value in the work of the *turathiiyyun*, or heritage thinkers, drawing instead on Western thought or on Muslim intellectuals such as Fazlur Rahman.<sup>55</sup> In my view, that explanation is only true to some extent because, as will become clear from the rest of this section, al-Jabiri's philosophy is also in no small measure influenced by Western thinking.

As already noted in the previous chapter, Baso's eponymous translation of a selection of al-Jabiri's writing, accompanied by a detailed introduction to the latter's thought, was the very starting point of the discourse of Islamic post-traditionalism. Appearing at a critical juncture in Indonesia's political history, it affirms the concomitant intellectual shift from political concerns to a preoccupation with epistemological questions. Virtually unknown in Indonesia just a few years earlier, interest among third-generation intellectuals in al-Jabiri had begun to grow in the very year of Suharto's fall, when Luthfi Assyaukanie included him in his typology of contemporary Arab discourse and Syafiq Hasyim's review of al-Jabiri's 'Critique of Arab Reason' trilogy.<sup>56</sup> Baso considers al-Jabiri as part of an avant garde consisting not just of the other earlier mentioned heritage thinkers, but encompassing a wider circle of Middle Eastern and North African intellectuals, which also includes Bassam Tibi, Aziz al-Azmeh, Muhammad Imarah, Hichem Djait, Abdullah Laroui and Fatima Mernissi. Unlike Indonesians, the mostly Francophone North African Muslim intellectual milieu was already quite familiar with French structuralist, poststructuralist and other postmodern thinkers.<sup>57</sup> Together with Arkoun, al-Jabiri was among the first Arab scholars to apply their critical faculties honed through their engagement with postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theory to the study of Islam. Although both have also written on current affairs in the contemporary Arab world, it is the underlying epistemologies that are more important to the young NU intellectuals than their views on concrete political issues. In order to understand Rumadi and Baso's analyses of 'post-renewal' thinking in Indonesia, it is therefore crucial to start by taking a more detailed look at their engagement with Arkoun and al-Jabiri.

*Al-Jabiri's intellectual journey*

In the introduction to his translation of al-Jabiri's essays, Ahmad Baso relates how the discovery of Yves Lacoste's comparative study of Ibn Khaldun and Marx contributed to the Moroccan philosopher's realization that there exists an Islamic way of making social-determinist and historical-materialist analyses which actually predates those of Marx by several centuries. In his own research on Ibn Khaldun, al-Jabiri presents this medieval North African statesman and savant's theory of the rise and fall of civilizations as a structural and systemic alternative to the Ash'ari projection of history, while Ibn Khaldun nevertheless managed to keep his admiration for Ghazali's Sufism intact.<sup>58</sup> Al-Jabiri also used this newly discovered awareness of the Muslim world's former intellectual prowess to challenge the Orientalist tradition in the study of Islam—even criticizing sympathetic Islamicists such as Louis Massignon and Henry Corbin for their egocentric interests in controversial Sufis such as al-Hallaj and Suhrawardi. This foreshadowed the realization which al-Jabiri shared with Arkoun that many classical Orientalists believed in the rather uncritical glorification of the Islamic past by Muslim writers of the classical era, while others fell into the same reductionist trap as nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Islamic reformists and revivalists by dismissing the Islamic tradition as stultified or decadent. Such shortcomings in terms of critical rigor continue to affect Muslim thinking today, regardless of whether it is traditionalist, salafi or leftist in orientation. Baso goes on to explain how al-Jabiri insisted that the Islamic heritage or *turath* must be understood as a broad and comprehensive concept, in which religion is seen 'not just as truth, facts, words, concepts, language and thought, but also as myth, legends, ways of behavior, and methods of thinking'.<sup>59</sup>

Al-Jabiri found further methodological cues for his own alternative interpretation of heritage in the work of structuralists like Ferdinand Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jean Piaget, as well as in the writings of poststructuralist philosophers such as Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.<sup>60</sup> From them he learned that reason can no longer be conceived in Cartesian terms as a coherent, conscious and transcendent process. Instead, the achievements in fields such as structural linguistics and psychoanalysis teach that reason is more accurately described as a collective understanding shaped by culture and by what Piaget called the

'cognitive unconscious'.<sup>61</sup> Al-Jabiri applied this heuristic apparatus in the magnum opus he wrote during the 1980s, presented as a trilogy under the title 'Critique of Arab Reason'.<sup>62</sup> Dissecting the intellectual history of the Arab world through critical-historical and structural analyses, combined with an ideology critique of dominant political discourses, the oeuvre presents a comprehensive deconstructionist reading of Islam as a historicized and objectified civilizational heritage, which needs to be wrested free from a priori assumptions and the authoritative dominance of a supposedly fixed tradition which shackle our autonomy as freethinking human beings.<sup>63</sup> Baso says that al-Jabiri's return to the tradition is not a matter of picking and choosing, but a holistic appropriation for the purpose of analyzing Arab-Islamic thought in its theological, linguistic, juridical as well as philosophical and mystical aspects.

Al-Jabiri's historical analysis of the tradition begins in the eighth century, a period he refers to as the 'era of recording' (*'asr tadwin*), during which the data was collected for constructing a historiography of both the pre-Islamic and early Islamic history of the Arabs. A rich storehouse of orally transmitted knowledge was committed to writing and then gradually structured into the discrete disciplines of Islamic learning such as *tafsir* (Qur'an exegesis), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *kalam* (discursive theology). When analyzing this period of recording and codification, al-Jabiri stresses that it is as important to pay attention to what is said as to what is not said if one wants to understand how knowledge receives its epistemological and ideological validity and authority. This brings Baso to the three *epistemes* which form the core of al-Jabiri's structural reading of Arab reason. Distinguishing between *bayani* (discursive), *'irfani* (hermetic or illuminationist) and *burhani* (demonstrative) reason, al-Jabiri argues that, since the era of recording, *bayani* or discursive reason has held center stage in Arab-Islamic thinking.<sup>64</sup> Texts become authoritative through discursive protocols and practices that rely predominantly on emulation and reasoning by analogy. He singles out the Shafi'i School of law as exemplary of this type of Arab reason in shaping both the interpretation of scripture and the development of juridical methodologies, while the Ash'arites applied the same approach to the field of discursive theology.<sup>65</sup> These references to two of the three doctrinal schools with which the *Aswaja* identify are very attractive for the critical minds among its contemporary Indonesian heirs in giving Islamic traditionalism new relevance for the present.



According to Baso, al-Jabiri insists that *bayani* reason is more at odds with its '*irfani*—hermetic or illuminationist—counterpart than with *burhani* reason, which he translates as rationalism. The reason for this affinity between discursive and demonstrative reason is that the Qur'an, Islam's core textual point of reference, recognizes and encourages the use of human reason. '*Irfan*, by contrast—at least in Baso's interpretation of al-Jabiri's account—finds its origins in the 'sciences of the ancients' (*'ulum al-awa'il*) of Persia, hermetic philosophy and neo-Platonism, all of which call into question the independent role for the human intellect. For that reason, al-Jabiri considers '*irfan* as irrational. Although Baso has reservations against such outright dismissal of the spiritual legacy of the East, which remains very influential in the traditional Islamic milieu from which Baso originates, he considers al-Jabiri's experimentation with criticizing Islam by applying methods and techniques from French poststructuralism and postmodernism as very valuable for Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in developing critiques of their own *turath* or heritage.<sup>66</sup> Baso explains that although al-Jabiri may subscribe to the *bayani* worldview on ideological grounds, because it takes the Qur'an as its point of departure, as an epistemology it is rejected because of contamination by a chaotic theory of causality and a way of atomist thinking which do not pass al-Jabiri's muster of rationality.<sup>67</sup>

So, in order to move critical Arab-Islamic thinking forward, al-Jabiri pins his hopes on *burhani* reason. By opting for demonstrative proof, he chooses to ignore the legacy of Eastern parts of the Muslim world, rejecting al-Farabi and Ibn Sina for their '*irfani* tendencies and Ghazali for his instrumentalization of Aristotelian logic. Instead, al-Jabiri's own integrated epistemology rests on a systemic understanding of the Hellenic heritage. While not denying that Europe is now the custodian of this legacy, like his fellow heritage thinker Hasan Hanafi, al-Jabiri posits that the origins of this use of Greek thinking are found in medieval Muslim Spain and Morocco. The critiques of medieval Andalusian scholars, such as Ibn Hazm and al-Shatibi, but especially the rationalism of Ibn Rushd, form the basis of al-Jabiri's panacea for both the *bayani* tendency to ground authority in texts and for the speculative irrationalism of the '*irfani* tradition.<sup>68</sup> Speaking as an academic philosopher, al-Jabiri claims that the Islamic tradition reached its highest sophistication when it became suffused with the *ruh rushdiya* or 'spirit of Averroism', because this strand of thought advocated a proper use

of Aristotelianism by embracing the methods of both induction and deduction, and by providing interpretations of the concepts, such as universal validity and historicity.<sup>69</sup>

Baso is no uncritical admirer of al-Jabiri, but shows himself to be an astute and perceptive observer of contemporary Arab-Islamic thinking. He ends his introduction by pointing to the 'nationalistic' tendencies that seem to infuse al-Jabiri's interest in the philosophies of the Muslim West, or Maghreb.<sup>70</sup> As a Moroccan, al-Jabiri's preference for the intellectual heritage of the Maghreb may indeed lay him open to the charge of chauvinism, but such accusations could also be leveled against the Indonesians themselves or Mohammed Arkoun who, as an Algerian Berber spending his working life in France, concentrated his efforts on rewriting the history of the Mediterranean, by questioning the validity of a projected cultural divide which supposedly separates its northern and southern shores.

*Mohammed Arkoun: cultural-intellectual border crosser*<sup>71</sup>

In contrast to Baso's primary reliance on al-Jabiri, Rumadi's elaboration of Islamic post-traditionalism draws more from the ideas of Mohammed Arkoun. Like al-Jabiri's 'Critique of Arab Reason', Mohammed's Arkoun's 'Critique of Islamic Reason' project was also turned into a life's work, while, in terms of methodology, they both advocate a multidisciplinary approach to researching the tradition of rational and critical thinking in the Muslim world. Trained as a historian, Arkoun was mostly concerned with setting a new research agenda which he called 'Applied Islamology'.<sup>72</sup> He envisaged establishing research teams of *chercheur-penseurs*, or 'scholar-thinkers', who would engage in what Arkoun called historical-linguistic, theological-philosophical and sociological-anthropological approaches to the study of Islam, while adopting a parallel rather than linear research model involving specialists from all relevant academic disciplines.<sup>73</sup>

Rumadi's point of departure is the contention that earlier attempts to stimulate fresh Islamic thinking, both inside and outside Indonesia, have always been hampered by the weight of the four-hundred-year dominance of conservative traditional Islam. Throughout the Muslim world, conservatives have always come down heavily on any splinter groups intent on trying something different.<sup>74</sup> With this, Rumadi places himself on a line with Mohammed Arkoun, who contended that there

has been no significant progress in Islamic thinking since the twelfth century. Any challenge of this status quo and any endeavor to make Islam relevant again to human-centered projects will require a research method in which Islam is transformed into a critical force, or—in Islamic post-traditionalist jargon—a *mazhab kritis*.<sup>75</sup> Again with an evident nod to Arkoun, Rumadi presents the whole edifice of supposedly authorized traditional Islamic learning as a closed structure developed for the purpose of safeguarding the sanctity of Islam and the position of its self-appointed custodians. In such an analysis, insider conclusions are not based on factual data but on theological convictions, whereby facts are measured against a reality that is actually subordinated to revealed texts.<sup>76</sup> Continuing to take his cues from Arkoun, Rumadi goes on to explain how a critique of this situation is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of Islamic reason. First of all, it is subordinated to an understanding of divine revelation that is in line with its orthodox manifestation. Secondly, it is expected to be deferential to authority and obedient to the hierarchy of the orthodox legal, theological and mystical schools. Finally, it must play a loyal part in accordance with a medieval worldview in which this religiously colored form of reason is frequently conflated with *raison d'état* or political interests.

In philosophical terms, Arkoun's critique of reason forms an epistemological interrogation of a particular scholarly field; in his case it is driven by dissatisfaction with the methodologies used in Islamic studies. As a relativized product of the historical development of religious thinking, the study of Islam must address both sacred and profane texts from historical, philosophical, theological, legal, sociological and anthropological perspectives, regardless of their cognitive status within a certain faith tradition. For the sake of academic rigor and clarity, Arkoun insists that his approach must take the risk of treating religious thinking in a 'disrespectful' or 'unjust' manner.<sup>77</sup> Paralleling al-Jabiri's 'said and unsaid', in the case of Arkoun it is the 'thought and unthought' which reveals how knowledge is validated and authorized in terms of both epistemology and ideology. The proposed alternative approach to text-critical analysis seeks to break open atrophied religious postulates which have turned the domain of the 'unthought' into the 'unthinkable'.

The resulting reification of Islam has created a host of problems. It has led to the conflation of Islam with religion as such, as well as seeing it as identical to the Muslim world without proper recognition of the contin-

gent historical evolution of this geographical space. From a historical-sociological point of view, Islam cannot be identified with any particular polity, nor is Islam—or its adjective Islamic—the same as being Muslim. Instead, it is best interpreted as a unifying force and motivating factor operating in widely varying societies. In the final analysis, the hold of orthodoxy on knowledge has been strengthened through the mutual reinforcement of the exegesis of sacred texts, religious tradition and political power.<sup>78</sup> The resulting religious discourse also denies any role for various academic disciplines in analyzing relevant religious phenomena. Arkoun counters that social and cultural anthropology reject this conflation of Islam, religion and state—arguing instead that religions are articulated through myth, narratives, symbols, parables, rituals, which taken together reflect a collective *imaginaire*.<sup>79</sup> This way, social-scientific approaches can help demonstrate how such articulations combine doctrinal universals with cultural specificities.

The next question that presents itself in Rumadi's rendition of Arkoun's investigations is how these criticisms can be turned into a new research methodology. Apparently he is not entirely certain whether projects such as Arkoun's Critique of Islamic Reason and al-Jabiri's Critique of Arab Reason carry a different ideological charge, or whether it is merely a difference in terminology without ontological implications. Rumadi defers to Baso's interpretation, in which the differences between Arkoun and al-Jabiri are seen as a variance of linguistic and geographical scope.<sup>80</sup> Arkoun's Critique of Islamic Reason extends to the non-Arabic traditions of thinking, whereas al-Jabiri restricts his epistemological critique to intellectual traditions which use Arabic and which are located within the cultural and geographical sphere of Arab societies. In contrast to the concepts that dominate Arkoun's conceptual apparatus, such as orthodoxy, revelation, myth, the *imaginaire* and symbols, al-Jabiri was mainly preoccupied with issues and themes from the linguistic domain of Arabic: the dichotomy between meaning and text; the fundamental and derivative branches of knowledge (*asl* and *far'*); allegory and truth (*majaz* and *haqiqa*); and the strictures of the Arab language's capacity as a domain of thinking which determine the limits of its worldview and the modes of thought of those using the language.<sup>81</sup> Unlike Arkoun's chronological classification of epistemes, al-Jabiri calibrates them according to their so-called *shurut as-sihha*, or 'preconditions of validity' (*syarat-syarat keabsahan* in Indonesian).<sup>82</sup> This involves a procedure that is compa-

rable to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason or the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, both of which investigate the conditions that make human rational activity possible. Finally, Baso notes that al-Jabiri used to describe himself as an epistemological researcher or an intellectual historian like Foucault, working on the archaeology of epistemes and the history of ideas. I submit that this forms another contrast with Arkoun, who presented himself as a *chercheur-penseur* operating along the lines of Derrida and engaging in deconstructionist readings of a civilization's archive of texts.<sup>83</sup>

In his contribution to the manifesto for Islamic post-traditionalism in *Tashwirul Afkar*, Zuhairi Misrawi also points to the differences between al-Jabiri's academic philosophy and Arkoun's shared interest with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd in analyzing the Qur'an using structural linguistics, semiotics and literary hermeneutics. Arkoun complemented this with a social-anthropological reading in order to produce a 'counter theology' along the lines of medieval humanists such as al-Tawhidi (d.1023) and al-Ma'arri (d.1058), or the theosophist Ibn al-Arabi (d.1240), all of whom challenged the dogmatic exclusivism and orthodoxy of the *Ahl al-Sunna*. Appreciative of the integration of linguistic and socio-cultural aspects with structural questions, which mark the epistemologies of al-Jabiri and Arkoun's critiques, or Abu Zayd's concept of text, Zuhairi Misrawi echoes Baso in singling out the significance of al-Jabiri's holistic reading of the Islamic tradition before trying to reconstruct it into an alternative tradition for the future.<sup>84</sup> The latter's advocacy of restoring the spirit of Averroism, which presents Ibn Rushd as the gateway to Europe, was meant to offer an escape from the 'Islam versus the West' binary as an unhelpful dichotomy that is presently hindering a productive synthesis of the two intellectual legacies. An accomplished Arabist trained at Cairo's al-Azhar University, Misrawi also highlights the methodological contributions of Abu Zayd, Arkoun and al-Jabiri to the study of Islam and contrasts these with the ideological preponderance of the writings of Hasan Hanafi, Tayyib Tizini and Husayn Muruwwa. He warns that the tension between the revolutionary and deconstructive approaches of these two camps could lead to a polarization and fragmentation that is not conducive to the further development of Islamic post-traditionalism.<sup>85</sup>

It is clear, then, that the young intellectuals from NU backgrounds drew more frequently on al-Jabiri and other heritage thinkers than Islamic modernists. Through them they also gained access to ideas

developed in postmodern philosophy and postcolonial thinking, demonstrating that acquaintance with and reliance on Western thought is no longer the exclusive domain of modernist Muslims.

*Islamic post-traditionalism as an epistemological method*

By bringing in al-Jabiri, Baso claims to continue Abdurrahman Wahid's pioneering efforts of introducing Indonesian audiences to the writings of other heritage thinkers, such as Hasan Hanafi and Fatima Mernissi as exponents of critical Muslim thinking about 'political action, such as nationalism, indigenization, secularization, and feminism'.<sup>86</sup> This shift in attention from politically engaged phenomenologists and sociologists to text critics such as al-Jabiri, Arkoun and Abu Zayd heralds the start of the epistemological phase of Islamic post-traditionalism. In *NU Studies*, Baso presents his involvement in shaping the intellectualization of the NU's young cadres as a 'new cultural strategy' modeled after the articulation of the voices of marginal people by intellectuals involved in South Asian subaltern studies. He seeks to subvert both the moderate-liberal tendency to reduce religion to the private sphere and the instrumentalization of Islam in Indonesia by institutions and movements such as the establishment's MUI, the vigilante FPI and the neo-Liberal JIL in what is also increasingly becoming an age of commodification from which even religion cannot escape. Baso considers the *anak muda NU* as resisting this tendency: they are no longer engaged in the rural economy, but neither are they part of the elitist 'Menteng generation' around Abdurrahman Wahid, nor have they joined the state bureaucracy. Instead, they are forming their own communities of organic intellectuals centered on NGOs engaged in emancipating rural and newly urbanized Muslims through grassroots-level initiatives.<sup>87</sup>

From this new habitus, they continue to contribute to the *manhajul Fikr NU*, or 'NU's method of thinking' developed earlier by Achmad Siddiq and Abdurrahman Wahid through what in postcolonial parlance is called the practice of 'writing back' (*menulis-balik*). Informed by the awareness that 'language is not just a "world-disclosing", but also a "world-constituting" exercise', this undertaking is geared towards 'producing a discourse and a new reality in terms of politics, religion, and imagination'.<sup>88</sup> This practice of 'writing back' forms the basis for an exercise in 'rewriting' (*menulis ulang*) Islam's intellectual tradition,

which Baso sees as the new strategy for Islamic post-traditionalism in trying to recapture agency on behalf of the Muslims.<sup>89</sup> This has become all the more important in the post 9/11 world, where all attention for things Islamic is focussed on radical Muslim militants at the expense of other—more representative—exponents, except when they profile themselves as ‘moderates’ by acting as allies of the West in the War on Terror.<sup>90</sup> Under these present circumstances, if the NU wants to narrate its own story of how it seeks to formulate an alternative—but no less radical—way of Islamic thinking that also defies neo-liberalism and globalization, it will continue to struggle to find a forum:

This is the problem of the NU [...] if it is objectified. However, the story will be different if the NU positions itself as the writing subject, as the author, as its own lord and master. This is clearly a strategy, an ‘epistemological rupture’ and paradigmatic revolution that will overturn current modernist-liberal theses on the NU.<sup>91</sup>

According to Baso, this new strategy of young NU intellectuals is an outflow of its own intellectual genealogy, as it reconnects them with what he calls the cultural NU and its leader Abdurrahman Wahid before he turned to politics. Following its decision to return to the *Khittah* 1926, throughout the 1990s the NU had advocated a social transformation directed towards a double corrective of religious primordialism and sectarianism, as well as the cosy relation between the New Order state and certain elements from Muslim civil society. Driven by third postcolonial generation of NU cadres, that reorientation reflected both a generational shift and an institutional shake-up. Wahid criticized the older leaders for being out of touch and incapable of grasping ‘the larger social dynamics of their position’. By refocussing on education and socialization, the NU can help to build an autonomous civil society with the *ulama* acting as ‘agents of social transformation’.<sup>92</sup> In order to be able to do that, Wahid had pushed forward the distinctly secular vision that NU leaders must either opt for a political career outside the NU or take up leadership positions within the organization. Effectively this also meant that the consultative board would take precedence over the executive, which was to the advantage of the largely Java-based *ulama* and to the detriment of NU politicians from other islands.<sup>93</sup> In both these instances, Abdurrahman Wahid had been the symbol of that opposition. In other words, the Islamic post-traditionalists sought to restore the *pra-istana* or (pre-palace) Abdurrahman Wahid as the chief articulator of an adversarial and anti-hegemonic dis-

course.<sup>94</sup> This dimension had disappeared from view in the course of Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency when the initial euphoria made place for disillusionment. His attempts to curtail the spread of neoliberalism by developing a new Indonesian–Chinese–Indian axis, reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s 'Bandung era', was cut short by US-supported civil education programs propagating the virtues of the free market and globalization, and frustrating attempts to build a welfare state in post-Suharto Indonesia.<sup>95</sup> After Abdurrahman Wahid's impeachment in 2001, the postra community took over as the torchbearers for this alternative discourse which is in clear defiance of the kind of liberal Islam that unabashedly champions capitalist neoliberalism.<sup>96</sup>

That same year, Rumadi wrote an opinion article for the newspaper *Kompas*, in which he highlighted the contrasts between Islamic post-traditionalism and liberal Islam. Presenting it as a more progressive and sophisticated strand of contemporary Muslim thinking than liberal Islam, he challenges the rejection of Islamic post-traditionalism by cynics who try dismissing it as a form of mimicry merely employed to reaffirm a group identity grounded in cultural affiliations with the NU. Operating in the intellectual interstices and using a form of heuristic eclecticism, Rumadi insists that Islamic post-traditionalism has serious epistemological ambitions, arguing that:

Even if the paradigm of liberal Islam stresses the 'authenticity', 'originality' and the 'purity' of Islam, postra is doing better in all these respects because of its familiarity with modern Arab thinkers like Abu Zayd, Shahrur, al-Jabiri, and others whose ideas often function as epistemological references. It is therefore no exaggeration to state that postra is 'liberal Islam plus' since it places more value on the local and the marginal. Personally, I hope liberal Islam will accept [the relevance of] locality and situations of marginality as part of their agenda, so that the liberal and postra agendas can come together.<sup>97</sup>

The underlying argument is that by accounting for the local and marginal, Islamic post-traditionalism brings religion closer to human sensibilities. It opens the possibility for a historicized interpretation of Islam as a living tradition practised in a specific society, at a particular time, and within concrete cultural settings. Of course, there is a tension between advocating the relevance of cultural specificity and the relevance of locality and propositions derived from ideas originating with North African and Middle Eastern thinkers who operate in cultural settings that are very different from those in Indonesia. Exploring how



this paradox is resolved will also shed light on Islamic post-traditionalism as an exponent of postcolonial thinking in a generic sense, since—as mentioned earlier—liminality is not just a contingent or coincidental characteristic of postcolonial discourses. Theorists of postcoloniality have turned this very marginality into a positive asset, and made it into the hallmark of that way of thinking. Working in the in-between and betwixt of cultural and intellectual traditions, postcolonial thinkers can be said to occupy what the earlier mentioned postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha calls a ‘Third Space’ in the interstices and on the margins of hegemonic thinking.<sup>98</sup>

By reaching out to his liberal and neo-modernist interlocutors, Rumadi anticipates that their shared experience of marginalization will make it possible to achieve a meeting of the minds between Muslims of both traditionalist and modernist backgrounds. Through this encounter Islamic modernists will also come to appreciate the relevance of local circumstances for the development of religious thought and the need for a cultural grounding of doctrines, even when they claim universal validity. In Rumadi’s view, this can be accomplished by a rigorous analysis of the discursive formations through which received knowledge of the Islamic heritage is transmitted.

In terms of epistemological methodology, Baso also claims that his proposed new cultural strategy challenges the approaches to the study of Islam promoted by the likes of Harun Nasution or the Egyptian–Kuwaiti scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl on grounds of their reification of ‘Islam as text’ and proximity to centers of orthodoxy and political power.<sup>99</sup> It also rejects Clifford Geertz’s interpretation of the *kyai*, or traditionalist Islamic teacher, as a passive ‘cultural broker’.<sup>100</sup> Instead, Ahmad Baso and other *anak muda NU* want to restore the anti-essentialist and non-reductive social ethics of Abdurrahman Wahid, which his critics dismissed as ‘the madness of Gus Dur’.<sup>101</sup> Such paradoxical embrace of madness or questionable—even repulsive—associations and convictions as virtues parallel the re-appreciation of controversial thinkers such as Nietzsche, de Man and Heidegger in the writings of Foucault and Derrida. Not concerned with ‘staging Islam in its modernness [*sic!*], in its textuality, and in its fixedness’, Baso wants to recover a politically contested, historically unfinished process. Like Foucault’s archaeology or Derrida’s archive, Islamic post-traditionalism is also interested in ‘routes’ rather than ‘roots’.<sup>102</sup>

By reconstituting the subjectivity of the NU as author instead of acting merely as informant, Baso’s writing-back also borrows from the

Argentinian scholar and postcolonial theorist Walter Mignolo. He draws a parallel between Mexico's Zapatistas and Indonesia's Islamic post-traditionalists as subalterns moving the 'managerial power and monotopic inspiration of any abstract universal'.<sup>103</sup> The ambition of the postra community to return their attention to the traditional, local, ethnic and communal also resonates with Edward Said's notion of polyphony and with his bidirectional translation as an alternative to the ethnographer's treatment of the informant as a passive cultural broker.<sup>104</sup> When discussing the ambitions and objectives of Islamic post-traditionalism it is therefore appropriate to speak of an epistemological rupture, because the alternative it presents is both subversive and exhilaratingly creative. In Baso's reading, the polyphony resulting from these cultural translation exercises that move in two directions is nothing other than the contemporary manifestation of *Aswaja's* historical ability to absorb and accommodate the theological, juridical, ethical and mystical dimensions of the Islamic tradition. At the same time, however, the proposed holistic framework stands in tense relationship to postra's reliance on al-Jabiri, who unambiguously privileges rational (*burhani*) thinking.

The multiple references to postcolonial and postmodern thinkers found in Baso's writings also point up that—true to its hybrid nature—Islamic post-traditionalism looks for a new synthesis of Islamic and Western intellectual traditions with local cultural expressions through critical conversations between the three. It is an intellectual construct driven by a local dynamic that not only involves intellectuals in the strict sense of the word. In the same year as Baso's *NU Studies* was published, postra's flagship journal *Tashwirul Afkar* released another introspective and self-examining theme issue, entitled 'Manhajul Fikr NU: An incomplete investigation'. In this volume, the writers took stock of the ways in which the NU tried to 'make *Aswaja* into a *manhaj*, a paradigmatic-conceptual constellation which has the potential of becoming a means and device (*tool*) for both thinking and action for the *nahdliyin*'.<sup>105</sup>

Aside from taking the ideas of their intellectual mentors to a new level of sophistication and critical rigor, Islamic post-traditionalists are also diametrically opposed to Arabizing anti-Western tendencies found among reactionary Muslims, who consider borrowings from non-Islamic thought a form of 'intellectual invasion' or *ghazuwul fikri*.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the resulting reinterpretation of Islamic history and the

rewriting of their own intellectual trajectories is also very different from the alternative readings of Indonesian history by reactionary Muslims found in such publications as Al Chaidar's *The Tragedy of Muslim in Indonesia 1980–2000* or *In the Shadow of Sukarno–Suharto. The Political Tragedies of Indonesian Islam from the Old Order to the New Order*, written by KISDI's Hartono Ahmad Jaiz.<sup>107</sup> Instead of being grounded in critical self-examination and self-reflection, the latter type of publications are symptomatic of the dualist—Manichaeen—reinterpretations inspired by conspiracy theories, in which the West plots to undermine the Muslim world in every possible way.<sup>108</sup>

The focus of Islamic post-traditionalists on method is not dictated by philosophical concerns alone; it is also informed by their dissatisfaction with the level of abstraction in which earlier rethinking has remained stuck. The NU's reorientation towards its original objectives was not an isolated and detached academic exercise, but driven by practical necessity, critical rigor and functionality.<sup>109</sup> That is why the intellectual involvement of young NU cadres in developing Islamic post-traditionalism combines the basic principle of *manhajul fikr*, outlined in the rethinking of the notion of *Aswaja*, with a sociology of knowledge that pays attention to the social, political and historical aspects which have shaped the NU as a school of thought.<sup>110</sup> In terms of generic intellectual historiography, the Islamic post-traditionalist approach can be interpreted as a form of resistance to the professionalization of intellectual activities as discussed and criticized by Bruce Robbins in *Secular Vocations*.

The ambition to transform discourse analysis into a method for constructive thinking, rather than a mere critique of historical narratives, also provides the underpinning for the claim advanced by Rumadi that the work of the postra community surpasses both Islamic neo-modernism and liberal Islam in terms of intellectual rigor.

### *Criticizing Islamic neo-modernism*

The rewriting of the history of *Aswaja* by present-day NU intellectuals, together with the epistemological insights gleaned from heritage thinkers such as al-Jabiri, Arkoun and Abu Zayd, as well as their direct acquaintance with non-Muslim postmodernists and postcolonial theorists, have all equipped the postra community with a suitable heuristic

apparatus for challenging the ideas of first-generation postcolonial intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid. At the core of the criticisms of young writers such as Ahmad Baso and Nur Khalik Ridwan is the accusation that the counter-narrative of renewal thinking has become a dominant discourse in its own right; in effect perpetuating the hegemonic projections of Sunni orthodoxy.

In his early writings, Ahmad Baso took issue with Madjid's uncritical linkage of Islam to politics and power, arguing that this attitude cannot be regarded as emancipatory and progressive. For Baso that is reason to call into question Madjid's reputation as a liberal Muslim.<sup>111</sup> Before the turn of the century, Baso's main concern had been Madjid's unqualified use and essentialist understanding of terms such as Islam, modernity and secularization, which were primarily shaped by the ideas of Western scholars such as Marshall Hodgson, Robert Bellah and Ernest Gellner. He blames Madjid for failing to educate his audience in a more critical examination of rationality and develop a qualified use of reason. Instead Madjid appears to be directing his followers towards a deference of authority and existing power structures on the basis of fictitious and mythical interpretations of history, as well as the revivalist readings of scripture by Western scholars and Islamic Reformers alike.<sup>112</sup> Baso goes on to argue that the glorification of certain episodes in the Islamic past made Madjid blind to a more subtle understanding of its early and classical periods. A critical deconstructionist rereading of key sources such as al-Tabari, Ibn Hisham and al-Maqrizi through the lenses of the heritage thinkers would have enabled Madjid to discern that 'the earliest Muslim community was not always described as the ideal model'.<sup>113</sup>

Baso's engagement with the ideas of Madjid at the end of the 1990s centered on the notion of civil society. Aside from his own generation's initial concern for concrete political questions in the years around the fall of the New Order regime, this preoccupation must also be seen as an outflow of the NU's shifting away from party politics in order to return to its set-up in accordance with the *Khittah* of 1926 as an emancipatory social association. According to Fauzan Saleh, differences in the interpretation of notions such as civil society are indicative of a 'deep cleavage between the traditionalists and the neo-modernists'.<sup>114</sup> While the NU chooses to speak of *masyarakat sipil*, even preferring the use of the English term 'civil society', Madjid and the neo-modernists around him opted for *masyarakat madani*—using an adjective derived

from the Arabic terms *tamaddun* (urban civilization) and *madina* (city, polity). It also suggests an association with the historical embryonic Muslim community led by the prophet in seventh-century Medina, the moral uprightness of which could be contrasted with the alleged social and economic injustices of the surrounding world. This terminological difference points up a more substantive and 'fundamental discrepancy between the two groups', which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter on the political debates between progressive and reactionary Muslims.<sup>115</sup>

Ahmad Baso further articulated his criticisms of Nurcholish Madjid in an article entitled 'From Islamic neo-modernism to Islamic post-traditionalism', which appeared in the *Tashwirul Afkar* issue of 2001. Reading this essay together with the introduction to the translations from al-Jabiri offers an exercise in the kind of intertextuality that is so characteristic of poststructuralist discourse analysis. In these texts Baso also takes issue with Western scholarship in contemporary Islam. He criticizes the Australian politician scientist Greg Barton for conflating Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid's thinking into the single category of neo-modernism, and is puzzled by the criteria used by Charles Kurzman in putting together his influential anthology *Liberal Islam*; wondering how Nurcholish Madjid ended up there alongside the likes of Rashid Ghannoushi, Mohammad Natsir and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Also a self-declared liberal Muslim such as Ulil Abshar-Abdalla was not sure what Kurzman means by the term 'liberal Islam'. Abshar-Abdalla goes on to say that if Kurzman meant to identify a new school (*mazhab baru*), he still remains puzzled, because he has 'not yet seen any precise definition'.<sup>116</sup> Baso contrasts Kurzman's *Liberal Islam* with another seminal publication on the subject: Leonard Binder's *Islamic Liberalism*. Binder describes Islamic Liberalism as the outcome of a dialectic between modernity, social transformation and local tradition, while the book's subtitle, 'A Critique of Development Ideologies', gives an indication of the contentious connotations attached to the term 'liberalism'. Baso uses Binder's juxtaposition of intellectuals such as Mohammed Arkoun, Abdallah Laroui, Samir Amin, Muhammad Imarah and Tariq Bishri to emphasize how their engagement with Marxism, Western liberalism and postmodernism is more congenial to the ideas of Abdurrahman Wahid than to those of classical and neo-modernist Muslim thinkers found in Kurzman's *Liberal Islam*.<sup>117</sup>

These Marxian connections also resonate with Nur Khalik Ridwan's *Bourgeois Pluralism: A Critic of Cak Nur's Reason of Pluralism*. Explaining that a critique is not to be taken in purely negative terms, but should actually be regarded as a homage to a thinker whose work is apparently considered worthy of critical engagement, Ridwan shares Baso's appreciation of al-Jabiri, Arkoun and Hanafi, while giving further nods of acknowledgement to Ali Harb's 'reading the unread' (*al-qira'a ma lam yuqra'*), as a riposte to Islam's prevailing logocentrism, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's 'what is silenced' (*maskut 'anhu*) which also points to a counter-narrative seeking to challenge the over-reliance on the hegemonic discourses that are thought to be the sole constituent of the Islamic tradition.<sup>118</sup> However, rather than just relying on a refraction through the lenses of these Arab heritage thinkers, Nur Khalik Ridwan takes his critical ammunition directly from the post-modernist arsenal of French discourse analysis. Taking up Roland Barthes' motif of 'The Death of the Author', Ridwan shows how the dismantling of an author's regime reveals that 'language and texts originate in a complex cultural frame of references', and that ideas are not just owned by individual thinkers, but form 'the possession of a certain society, ideology, and trans-individual interest'.<sup>119</sup> While Foucault's archaeology of discourse provides Ridwan with additional tools for tracking the *epistemes* that govern discursive formations, the latter are not autonomous or sterile, but always representing certain interests which also need to be dug up and exposed as part of this archaeology of ideas. To that end, Ridwan uses Louis Althusser's theory of ideology and Michel Pêcheux's engagement with the role of the class struggle. In spite of this, Ridwan's understanding of class remains rather simplistic and essentialist; he restricts modernist Muslim organizations operating under the Masyumi umbrella as belonging exclusively to the bourgeoisie, while the NU, after its departure from Masyumi in 1952, is turned into the sole representative of the Muslim proletariat.<sup>120</sup> As noted earlier, Munir Mulkhan had already demonstrated the presence of a proletarian strand within the modernist Islamic discourse, while the exalted status of the *kyai* within the NU evinces the existence of a traditionalist Islamic aristocracy.

In the case of Nurcholish Madjid, Ridwan argues that his conceptualization of pluralism is shaped by his belonging to a well-educated and pious Muslim family from East Java, as well as his subsequent interaction with the Masyumi establishment and the Islamic bourgeois

circles of Jakarta in which his ideas came to fruition. These contacts and connections then translated into a high public profile which eventually enabled him to access the exclusive circles of the New Order's political and economic power elite.<sup>121</sup> Of particular interest is Ridwan's characterization of HMI: although formally an independent Muslim student organization, he maintains that it is dominated by bourgeois modernist Muslims. Even if occasionally upwardly-mobile Muslims from modest backgrounds—aside from Nurcholish Madjid, he also mentions Akbar Tanjung and Anas Urbaningrum—make it into the top social echelons, they do so as individuals and not as representatives of a particular community and class.<sup>122</sup>

Concomitant with the shift in attention among Islamic post-traditionalists from politics to regimes of knowledge, Baso too revisited Madjid's epistemology for the purpose of subjecting it to another critical examination. Alerted by Nurcholish Madjid's acknowledgement of Ibn Taymiyya as the key authority for establishing what constitutes 'pure Islam', in *NU Studies* Baso quarries the relationship between Madjid's project for the renewal of Islamic thinking and the ideological roots of Salafi reformism. Tracing the genealogy of Madjid's ideas by means of an epistemological excavation along the lines of Foucault's archaeological critique, he presents Ibn Taymiyya-inspired 'purification missions' shared by Islamic reformists and Nurcholish Madjid as part of the same historicized discursive formation traversing the fields of theology, law and philosophy, touching along the way on social-political questions as well.<sup>123</sup> Also Madjid's preoccupation with discovering an original, authentic, pure—and therefore supposedly true—Islam that can be considered as normative, and thus the binary opposite of 'inauthentic' traditionalist representations, cannot be divorced from history and historical experience, or what Madjid himself refers to as 'civilization'. Therefore, Baso explains, the doctrinal purification project automatically has implications for the social order, which means it has both epistemological and ideological dimensions.<sup>124</sup> Madjid's ambition to create a coherent and systematic explanatory model for religion and modernity makes this not merely an operative but also a paradigmatic exercise.<sup>125</sup> The claim that what constitutes normative pure Islam has ultimately transcendent origins turns the paradigm of Islamic neo-modernism into what Jean-François Lyotard called a metanarrative or metadiscourse. The key question that Baso's critique seeks to answer is whether Madjid's pure and authentic Islam

establishes 'at one at the same time a value and political system or just a value system'.<sup>126</sup>

Baso traces the problem of Madjid's quest for a pure Islam back to his *pembaruan* thinking, in which he argued for two mutually exclusive epistemologies. The first one forms the horizontal dimension governing the interpersonal relations of humankind's secular existence grounded in reason. The second is the vertical one related to the individual believer's vertical relationship with God, coined in the transcendental terms of negative theology and inaccessible to humankind's rational faculty. In this spiritual domain, humans have to rely on revealed knowledge passed on through prophecy, which is subsequently received and accepted by the innate human disposition towards faith (*fitra*). According to Baso, this type of faith must not be read in a conventional manner as the kind of internalization found in Sufism or other mystical practices. Instead, it is better understood in dynamic and productive terms, functioning as both a normative and epistemological basis. Baso goes on to explain that a key aspect in Madjid's argumentation for linking faith to the truth of a pure Islam is a meditation on the Islamic creed: How its initial negation 'there is no God' is inexorably linked to 'but Allah' as truly transcendent—two sides of the same coin, as it were. Interpreted as liberating humankind from all misguided beliefs and interpretations, it provides Madjid with the heuristic means to present his renewal thinking as a liberation from sectarianism, traditionalism and other in his view archaic exponents of religiosity that have robbed Islam of its 'creativity and spirit of *ijtihad*'.<sup>127</sup> Not only that, Baso claims, it has also led to a conceptualization of secularization by Madjid that is different from its conventional understanding. In Madjid's *pembaruan* thinking, liberalization, secularization and freethinking or rationalization are all packaged together for the purpose of setting free traditional values and finding new interpretations oriented towards the future.<sup>128</sup>

The undesirable consequence of this apparent coherence of secularity and reason is that it divorces 'facts and rules' (*hakikat-hakikat dan hukum-hukum*) established through reason from the truth of religion, by reserving the latter domain for revelation.<sup>129</sup> To Baso's mind, this comes down both to declaring God taboo to rational examination; and consequently resulting in the instrumentalization of rational thinking. Noting Madjid's tendency to rely on copious citations from the Qur'an and exclusivist interpretations wrapped up in a 'rationalist–progressive'



framework, Baso characterizes this approach as what Mohammed Arkoun called a ‘sublimation’. This refers to a process in which a historical interpretation is cleansed of its secular aspects, whereby Qur’anic discourse and its interpretation merge into one ‘spiritual epic’ that is considered as transcendent and therefore outside history.<sup>130</sup> Such a value-laden hermeneutical exercise towards establishing an original and true Islam is bound to conflate epistemological and normative standards. Pointing up a contrast with al-Jabiri’s Critique of Arab Reason Project, Baso concludes that ‘in Nurcholish Madjid’s mind, the renewal project is not intended to criticize the “value system” and “political reason”—or its a “regime of truth production”’.<sup>131</sup>

Baso goes on to claim that it was Nurcholish Madjid’s exposure to Fazlur Rahman and the latter’s conceptualization of Islamic neo-modernism, during his doctoral studies at the University of Chicago, that led him to accept Ibn Taymiyya as the ‘forefather of modern Islamic renewal thinking’—an admiration he shared with two other former Indonesian students of Fazlur Rahman: the Muhammadiyah leaders Amien Rais and Ahmad Syafii Maarif.<sup>132</sup> To his credit, Baso is one of only a few interlocutors to have actually engaged in a close reading of Madjid’s unpublished PhD thesis on Ibn Taymiyya. As part of his epistemological archaeology, Baso sets out to establish how Nurcholish Madjid’s reading of Ibn Taymiyya’s simultaneous challenge of the use of logic by the *mutakallimun*, or discursive theologians of Islam’s classical era, and Muslim philosophers, such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, relates to the *Pembaruan* project; all for the reason of answering a crucial question: how renewal thinking was brought into line with Fazlur Rahman’s Islamic neo-modernism, which Baso characterizes as a totalizing system of evaluation seeking to isolate ‘true and authentic Islam’ from all other interpretations.<sup>133</sup>

The crux of Ibn Taymiyya’s argument that all human knowledge is intuitive and particular, and that it only relates to the external world, fits surprisingly well with Nurcholish Madjid’s earlier mentioned two epistemologies governing the horizontal and vertical dimensions of human life. Whether proceeding through empirical data or by deductive logic, Ibn Taymiyya concluded that, in both instances, philosophical thinking only yields particular insights and its supposed universals are nothing but mental constructs.<sup>134</sup> Strangely reminiscent of al-Jabiri’s taxonomy, Ibn Taymiyya insists that this cannot be qualified as demonstrative proof or *burhan*, but merely as plain reasoning by analogy, which forms part

of *bayani* thinking. Baso dismisses such a rendition of Ibn Taymiyya's criticism of logic as too descriptive and lacking in analytical rigor, because Madjid failed to engage in a historicized critique which properly assesses the biases governing Ibn Taymiyya's refutations. But then, Baso points out that Madjid's interest is not analytical in the academic sense, but geared towards reconciling Islamic and Western thinking by laying 'the foundations for an argumentation that is more "specifically Islamic"—and thus truly "rational"—on top of the "ruins" of other people's reasoning which is not "specifically Islamic"'.<sup>135</sup>

Baso's conclusion that 'the principles of rationalism which were used to develop a basis for a priori universals outside [the domain] of religious truths' are irrelevant to Madjid's critique of religion again dovetails nicely with the earlier mentioned distinction between the epistemologies of desacralized secular knowledge of the world and knowledge of the transcendent through the revelation of the Qur'an and through the traditions of the Prophet. Given Ibn Taymiyya's earlier contention that human knowledge is restricted to an intuitive understanding of mere particulars, the single approved method of applying reason in line with the divinely endowed capacity of *fitra* is therefore restricted to *qiyas tamthil*, or reasoning by analogy, which stays close to the external and particular—read literal—meaning of the text. Thus, Baso explains, the very simplicity of Ibn Taymiyya's methodology offered Madjid a means for stripping away the philosophical abstractions to which religion had been reduced. By distinguishing 'between the "real" and pure Islamic doctrine and that what constitutes a product of the historical and cultural development of the Muslim community', Nurcholish Majdid claimed that Ibn Taymiyya's system of thinking remains relevant for the modern world.<sup>136</sup>

However, Baso has a problem with making a convincing case for this meaning that Nurcholish Madjid subscribed to Ibn Taymiyya's 'purification of social-political systems through Islamic-military alliances'.<sup>137</sup> Both in his writings on civil society from the late 1990s and in the chapter on the alleged similarities between Wahhabism and Islamic neo-modernism in *NU Studies*, Baso is forced to direct his criticism not so much at Nurcholish Madjid, but at his mentor Fazlur Rahman, whose political views indeed leave him exposed to some very uncomfortable questions. Madjid's interest in Ibn Taymiyya was primarily epistemological in nature, ignoring—as per his own insistence—the cantankerous mufti and notorious warrior for the faith.<sup>138</sup>

Unlike Fazlur Rahman, Madjid does not discuss associations between Ibn Taymiyya's intellectual legacy and religious-military alliances, such as the one between the Arabian scholar Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d.1793) and the chieftain Muhammad ibn Sa'ud (d.1765). While this led Fazlur Rahman to transpose that concrete historical political pact into what he calls 'Wahhabism' as a generic term for modern Islamic liberation movements, none such case can be made against Nurcholish Madjid.<sup>139</sup>

Nevertheless, Ahmad Baso maintains that Fazlur Rahman is responsible for the wide currency of Wahhabism as a blanket term for radical Islamism and for proposing that Ibn Taymiyya is 'the father of *tajdid*' or 'spiritual father' of Islamic modernism as a purifying force in the socio-political systems of the Muslim world; a proposition that has become a recurring motif in the writings of some of Fazlur Rahman's other students who went on to become leading figures in the modernist Muhammadiyah movement.

### *Islamic neo-modernism redefined*

Before examining the Muhammadiyah's relationship with Fazlur Rahman's Islamic neo-modernism, I want to offset the way in which NU intellectuals, such as Baso, try reducing Nurcholish Madjid's later thinking to a form of Wahhabism, by taking a closer look at some other aspects of his thought discussed in the writings of some of Madjid's followers.

I want to make the case that Nurcholish Madjid is a more complex intellectual than comes across from analyses conducted by the likes of Ahmad Baso. Madjid's multi-layered thinking on issues such as secularism stands not only in contrast to Baso's essentialization of the later Madjid as a Wahhabi or a Salafi thinker. Also Madjid's interest in spirituality, and his positive appreciation of Sufi spirituality, set Madjid apart from Salafism, as well as from the this-worldly preoccupations prevailing in Muhammadiyah circles. In this regard, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla has a more measured view of Nurcholish Madjid, pointing out that, through his engagement with all aspects of Islamic thinking, he has created an 'epistemic community', the ideas of which are shaped by mutual influences and shared commonalities, even though the underlying paradigms are not the same.<sup>140</sup> Almost diametrically opposed to Ahmad Baso's account, Yudi Latif unabashedly calls Nurcholish Madjid 'the

most celebrated intellectual of his generation', presenting him as a positive contrast to his contemporary Abdurrahman Wahid whom Latif considers 'the most controversial Muslim intellectual' in present-day Indonesia.<sup>141</sup> As a former vice rector of Paramadina University, Latif's preference for Madjid comes as no surprise, while his role in ICMI may account for the negative assessment of the late NU leader on grounds of his boycott of that organization during the 1990s and his later political maneuvering as head of state.

In his book on Indonesia's Muslim intelligentsia, Latif notes that the intellectuals born between 1935 and 1945 'responded to the challenge of modernization and Muslim political frustration with energy and creativity'.<sup>142</sup> Because of the experience they had gained from holding leading positions in Islamic student organizations during the 1960s and 1970s, they were psychologically and intellectually better prepared to cope with the tensions and conflicts resulting from political repression and exposure to ideological radicalization than previous generations. At the time, this power was mainly concentrated in the HMI—the general Muslim Students Association which was much more influential than either the NU-affiliated PMII or the Muhammadiyah's IMM, because the latter two were overshadowed by the leadership of their mother organizations.

Latif positions Madjid as a towering figure occupying a moderate position between two opposing camps within HMI. On one side stood what he calls the Yogyakarta-based liberals, which included Djohan Effendi, Dawam Rahardjo and Ahmad Wahib. They stressed the importance of Islamic values as opposed to the institutionalization of Islamic political doctrine, privileging intellectual renewal over 'obsessions with formal and quantitative Islamic achievements'.<sup>143</sup> On the other side were the reactionary Islamists—*dakwah* activists with power bases at secular institutions of higher learning in Bandung and Solo. Even though these Islamists did not object to the use of science, technology or rational thought, they rejected Madjid's secularization-modernization thesis because of its association with the West. Even more so—and in marked contrast to the notorious slogan 'Islam, Yes! Islamic Party, No!'—the reactionaries regarded Islam as a complete way of life which did not allow for a separation between religion and politics. During his years as HMI chairman between 1967 and 1971, Madjid developed a set of ideas with which he tried to negotiate between the political activism pursued by the HMI's Jakarta-Bandung

axis and what Latif calls the ‘ideational course’ of the Jakarta–Yogyakarta axis.<sup>144</sup>

Even though the HMI lost much of its lustre in the wake of the political clampdown of the late 1970s, thanks to the efforts of senior intellectuals like Mukti Ali and Harun Nasution the reformed IAINs helped ensure the perpetuation of Nurcholish Madjid’s ideas. Moreover, the institutions’ growing popularity among students from traditionalist backgrounds and the close personal relationship between Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid resulted in renewal thinking also beginning to reverberate in NU circles, which were already in a state of flux due to the NU leader’s own pioneering reform agenda. Cross-pollination between Madjid’s Islamic neo-modernism and what could be called the Islamic neo-traditionalism of Abdurrahman Wahid was further stimulated through the mushrooming of Muslim NGOs. Instead of Baso’s binary opposition, Latif conceived of it in terms of a confluence of ideas, because there is much more that unites than separates Abdurrahman Wahid’s ‘Islamic paradigm called “*pribumisasi Islam*” (indigenization of Islam)’ and the ideas of Nurcholish Madjid or other, intellectually even more adventurous, thinkers.<sup>145</sup>

Islamic NGOs and think tanks were not only important for the development of Abdurrahman Wahid’s innovative rethinking of traditionalist Islam at the grassroots level, but also as a crucial component in the emergence of a new discursive space where the *dakwah* and *pembaruan* activists could meet. There they found a common ground for what Latif has dubbed the ‘development of the “Third Way” Movement’, which in turn became the seedbed for the NGOs and ‘Self-Reliant Community Institutions’ (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*, LSMs) which began flourishing in the 1970s.<sup>146</sup> Madjid, Wahid and left-leaning progressives such as Dawam Rahardjo and Utomo Danajaya stood at the cradle of LP3ES and LKiS. The latter duo continued their omnipresence well into the 1980s, when they again teamed up with Wahid and the ‘neo-Marxist’ Adi Sasono to found P3M, while Utomo joined Madjid in setting up Paramadina.<sup>147</sup> Yudi Latif also recalls that the late Ahmad Wahib had described Nurcholish Madjid as—by temperament—‘a man of learning and reading. The book [...] his first beloved friend.’<sup>148</sup> Facing up to the ‘dilemma of having to choose between intellectual integrity and extra-intellectual contingencies’, Latif concludes that, ultimately, Madjid was unwilling to sacrifice the intellect to dogmatic stagnation. For that he was prepared to

suffer public hostility and rejection as the price that had to be paid for being part of an intellectual avant garde.

Notwithstanding Baso's insinuation that Nurcholish Madjid was inclined towards Ibn Taymiyya's Salafism, Latif judges *pembaruan* thinking as retaining a closer affinity with the progressive thinking originating from Yogyakarta than the Islamist camps in Bandung or Solo, and that this was the reason why Madjid was disowned by DDII circles around Mohamed Natsir. Also in terms of political influence, Latif's assessment is more nuanced than Baso's. Although the discussion groups and reading culture stimulated by the *Pembaruan* Movement and their second-generation successors had much less public exposure, because they did not command the kind of audiences reached by the *dakwah* activists, instead the ideas of Nurcholish Madjid percolated through into the political structures of the New Order via figures such as his successor as HMI chairman, Akbar Tanjung, who made a stellar career in Golkar.<sup>149</sup> It was this kind of access to government circles that helped *pembaruan* thinking to transform itself from a counter-narrative into a dominant Islamic discursive formation, and with that also more vulnerable to criticisms of hegemonic pretensions by the articulators of newly emerging oppositional discourses.

Also the Muhammadiyah intellectual Ahmad Najib Burhani opines that Nurcholish Madjid's view on what constitutes Indonesian Islam is shaped by political considerations rather than the cultural ones informing Wahid's indigenization of Islam.<sup>150</sup> Madjid's position differs from that of Islamic modernists belonging to the former Masyumi camp in the sense that, although Indonesian Muslim identity was defined by its opposition to Dutch colonialism, in an independent pluralist country the political role of Islam should be transformed into an integrative force; an objective that is not served by striving for an Islamic state. In Burhani's estimation, Madjid's take on the uniqueness of Indonesian Islam contrasts with that of Abdurrahman Wahid in that he does not see its cultural distinctiveness as a positive asset. Whereas Wahid considers the Indonesian manifestations of Islam as a reflection of its cosmopolitanism, Madjid regards them as marginal because of their limited exposure to the defining aspects from Arab culture. Therefore, focusing on differences will not help Indonesian Muslims to overcome their sense of inferiority towards other parts of the Muslim world.<sup>151</sup>

For Burhani, such a cultural reading presents a paradigm shift in the perception of the differences between traditionalist and modernist

Muslims. With the growing influence of postmodernism, the initial praise for modernist Muslim involvement in Indonesia's economic development has turned into blame 'for eradicating the richness of local cultures and increasing feelings of spiritual emptiness'.<sup>152</sup> It is no coincidence that Islamic post-traditionalists have taken the lead in this debate. At the same time, Burhani stresses that these are differences of opinion about strategy. Emerging from sharing a concern for the role of religion in public life, both groups are convinced that in Indonesia Muslim and national identity are indivisible, and that the varieties of Indonesian Islam are at the level of manifestation, not essence. They also agree that striving for an Islamic state will break rather than solidify the bonds among Indonesian Muslims. However, 'for both Madjid and Wahid, resisting political Islam means something else than banning participation in politics'.<sup>153</sup> But whereas Wahid believes that Indonesian Islam should assert its ability to stand on its own, Madjid thought its intellectual tradition was not strong enough to do so. This reflects a difference between Muslim traditionalists and modernists in their perceptions of the role of culture. To Wahid's mind, local manifestations should not lose sight of modernity; but for Madjid, coming to terms with modernity is a key preoccupation and the main reason for following his teacher Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutics of the Double Movement. Recalling Burhani's earlier mention of the Muhammadiyah's new openness to cultural Islam at the organization's 2010 congress, and his acknowledgement of the influence of Arab thinkers, such as Hanafi and al-Jabiri, on Abdurrahman Wahid and the Islamic post-traditionalists, it is fair to conclude that the lines between modernists and traditionalists are even more blurred than already came across from Burhani's comparative study of the Muhammadiyah and NU.<sup>154</sup>

Instead of focussing on culture, Budhy Munawar-Rachman—another member of the Ciputat School, and probably Nurcholish Madjid's closest associate during the twenty years after his return from Chicago—turns the gaze again on Islamic neo-modernism through an epistemological lens. Breaking down the category into several sub-discourses, of which Madjid's later thinking forms only one variant, Munwar-Rachman's typology of neo-modernist Islamic discourses offers a more comprehensive impression than the essentialist critique of Ahmad Baso. Moreover, building on Jalaluddin Rakhmat's distinction between 'conceptual and actual Islam', Munawar-Rachman insists that Islamic neo-modernism is not situated on the conceptual level of

the *numen*, as Baso claims, but presents a variety of interpretations of actual phenomena.<sup>155</sup>

According to the social theorizing to which Munawar-Rachman's assessment is evidently partial, attention needs to be paid to the technical, practical and emancipatory aspects of religious traditions, which are open to empirical-analytical, historical-hermeneutical and social-critical examinations respectively. Within Munawar-Rachman's framework of Indonesia's neo-modernist Islamic discourse, these three types of analysis have shaped what he calls 'rational', 'civilizational' and 'transformative Islam'.<sup>156</sup> These three views of the Islamic tradition are different, but at the same time complement each other by introducing the notion of heritage into modernist Islamic thinking. To Budhy Munawar-Rachman, the transformation of classical Islamic modernism into neo-modernism during the last twenty-five years is as paradigmatic as the fading differences between traditionalist and modernist Muslims are to Ahmad Najib Burhani.

The first sub-category of rational Islam is represented by the former rector of Jakarta's IAIN, Harun Nasution, and Djohan Effendi, erstwhile member of the Yogyakarta-based 'Limited Group' and long-serving chairman of the Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace (ICRP). Munawar-Rachman defines it as a strand of thinking preoccupied with the technicalities of subjecting Islamic phenomena to empirical analysis. The epistemological tradition of civilizational Islam is grounded in a semantic analysis or hermeneutics that finds its origins in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. Although he singles out Nurcholish Madjid and Kuntowijoyo as the key individuals who have shaped the understanding of Islam as a civilization, Munawar-Rachman also notes the contributions of Abdurrahman Wahid and Jalaluddin Rakhmat to this strand of Islamic neo-modernist thinking. The third sub-discourse, transformative Islam, is mainly found among NGO activists and academics from the field of applied sciences, such as the economists Dawam Rahardjo and Adi Sasono, who were both influenced by the social theory of the Frankfurt School, Gramsci's dependency theory, and postmodern critiques associated with Michel Foucault. According to Budhy Munawar-Rachman's fellow Ciputat School disciple Bahtiar Effendy:

Seen from the reconciliatory perspective of the renewal movement, the intellectual pronouncements of the social transformation school are more complex—thus more difficult—to describe. First, the complexity lies in the



## THE WEIGHT OF THE PREDECESSORS

choice of the agenda, which is populist and society-oriented in character. Second, it also rests in the political overtones which appear to lead to the formation of a strong society *vis-à-vis* the state, rather than simply directed at the process of political reconciliation between Islam and the state.<sup>157</sup>

Taken together, the epistemes of rational, civilizational and transformative Islam make up the discourse of Islamic neo-modernism in Indonesia, which grew out of the *Pembaruan* Movement set in motion in the 1970s. They must be understood as complementary and not mutually exclusive agendas for research and action geared towards transforming the ideological function of Muslim intellectualism from a predominantly normative understanding towards a more historicized interpretation. By way of illustration, Munawar-Rachman goes on to explain that during his years as leader of the *Pembaruan* Movement, Nurcholish Madjid too fitted into the category of rational Islam, but during the course of his postgraduate studies in America he gradually shifted towards the civilizational approach. Whereas the former is primarily interested in the formal and technical use of logic in the early philosophies of al-Kindi and the Mu'tazila School, or by later classical thinkers such as al-Ash'ari, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taymiyya, civilizational Islam directs its attention to excavating the meaning of what in Indonesian is called *Islam Sejati*, or 'real Islam', by means of empathic phenomenological investigations.<sup>158</sup> This interest in encouraging a climate of open communication is evidently derived from the Frankfurt School and provides, in turn, a connection between civilizational and transformative Islam. It reflects the shift towards a more engaged concern for emancipating the Muslim masses through what Munawar-Rachman calls 'conscientizing research'.<sup>159</sup> Introduced at educational institutions inspired by the philosophy of Paulo Freire, it seeks to guide scholarship through the stages of utopia and ideologization defined by Mannheim towards reflection and social action. Munawar-Rachman's account of the development of Islamic neo-modernism is thus more nuanced than the depiction rendered by Ahmad Baso. In this regard it is also worth pointing out that Freire has not only left its mark on Islamic neo-modernists such as Munawar-Rachman, but progressive intellectuals from NU backgrounds, such as Ahmad Suaedy, have also adopted Freire's conscientization.<sup>160</sup>

According to Munawar-Rachman, Harun Nasution's rationalist ethos remained stuck in the academic questioning of the binary between absolute and relative Islam, such as the moral implications of

free will versus determinism and what that means for human responsibility and the potential of self-liberation. This prevented rational Islam from escaping the clutches of the totalizing effects of Greek thinking, in particular Aristotelianism, which eventually brought about the negative reactions of al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya, who accused the rationalists of losing sight of religion altogether. Here lies the interest of Nurcholish Madjid in Ibn Taymiyya, because his writings provide the most forceful articulation of these criticisms. At the same time, Madjid doesn't want to do away with philosophical thinking altogether, but restore it to its rightful place by appealing to other exponents of rational thought found in the Islamic past, in particular the inclusivism advocated by Ibn Rushd—a point that Nurcholish Madjid has emphasized, but Ahmad Baso has chosen to ignore.

A careful reading of the writings of Madjid's teacher, Fazlur Rahman, also shows that his version of Islamic neo-modernism challenges the 'artificial character of the intellectual-scientific development in classical Islam' which resulted in a fragmented form of ad hoc intellectualism and an extrinsic—that is literalist—reading of the Qur'an.<sup>161</sup> In the course of his own intellectual journey, Nurcholish Madjid adopted Fazlur Rahman's contextualizing approach which seeks to offset the 'atomism' affecting both conventional interpretations of classical Islamic thinking and the apologetics of Islamic reformism, taking as an alternative Ibn Taymiyya's literalist interpretation of scripture.<sup>162</sup> Tracing Madjid's intellectual genealogy, Munawar-Rachman's contention that the young Nurcholish Madjid was already more critically inclined than Harun Nasution undermines Baso's reductionist take on Islamic neo-modernism. Madjid's distinction between the *truth* of processes and the *Truth* (capital 'T') of religious and philosophical imperatives was grounded in historicized hermeneutics resonating with Karl Popper's falsification principle.<sup>163</sup> The inclusivism and pluralism that characterizes the understanding of Islam as a civilization puts Nurcholish Madjid in the same camp as the heritage thinkers, who project *turath*, or heritage, as the motor and mediator of modernity. Munawar-Rachman goes on to explain that this enabled Nurcholish Madjid to accommodate a Western sociological concept like Weber's work ethic within the Qur'anic context of *Tawhid*—the Islamic core tenet of divine unity and unicity. The appreciation of human endeavor found in civilizational Islam answers one of the questions which is also raised by Ahmad Baso: That Islamic neo-modernism constitutes first

and foremost a value system.<sup>164</sup> Within the context of Indonesia as a Muslim nation it shows a sense of 'Indonesianness' that cannot be reduced to a form of puritan essentialism. However, in contrast to Ahmad Baso's reduction of Nurcholish Madjid's Islamic neo-modernism to a form of puritan Islam, Munawar-Rachman maintains that it reflects a civilizational understanding of Islam, which preserves a distinct 'Indonesianness' (*Keindonesiaan*), epitomized in one of Nurcholish Madjid's most renowned books: *Modern Indonesian Islam*.<sup>165</sup>

Whereas Nurcholish Madjid's understanding of civilizational Islam is first and foremost the result of a hermeneutics grounded in Qur'anic ethics, the historian and literary writer Kuntowijoyo drew attention to the sociological dimensions of Islam's sacred text.<sup>166</sup> Although Budhy Munawar-Rachman was one of Nurcholish Madjid's closest collaborators, his earlier intellectual formation also holds the clues for his simultaneous appreciation of the alternative version of civilizational Islam formulated by Kuntowijoyo. While forming an integral part of his Prophetic Social Science, Kuntowijoyo's civilizational Islam also has affinities with the project of transformative Islam, for which Dawam Rahardjo functioned as the additional lynchpin binding the two discourses together.<sup>167</sup> Kuntowijoyo used social theory as a bridge between projections of Islam as an ideal type and the social reality of the Muslim community as bridged by social theory, arguing that it offered a vocabulary for articulating the 'special paradigm of the Qur'an'.<sup>168</sup> Inspired by Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigm shift, Kuntowijoyo uses the term 'paradigm' to demonstrate that Prophetic Social Science as a transformative force is not only relative, but—with additional bows to Marx and Wittgenstein—is also ideologically and linguistically determined. This means that the Qur'an can be understood as a way of thinking which has the potential of being developed into an epistemological paradigm which suits the social structures of Muslim communities.<sup>169</sup>

Since such an endogenous Islamic social theory is still very much a work in progress, Kuntowijoyo suggested that—for the time being—it pays to look at Western theoretical models such as those developed by Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Together the systems of thought of these seminal modern thinkers form a triad connecting social, technological and cultural structures of modernity which offer the building blocks for a transformation of Islamic normativity into a Muslim method for social-scientific inquiry. It is at this point that Kuntowijoyo's civiliza-

tional Islam connects with the transformation theology later developed by Moeslim Abdurrahman. In Munawar-Rachman's reading, Kuntowijoyo's understanding of transformation is no other than Nurcholish Madjid's use of the Weberian work ethic, the only difference being that the latter has a closer affinity with Weber's structures of technology, while the former more resembles Durkheim's preoccupation with culture. In the view of proponents of undiluted forms of transformative Islam, such as Dawam Rahardjo and Adi Sasono, the theological preoccupations of Nurcholish Madjid and Kuntowijoyo's overamplification of culture share a misplaced confidence in what can be learned from modern Western thinking. They vent their criticisms of both rational and civilizational Islam in explicitly anti-hegemonic terms. They claim that—historically—both Islamic rationalism and Sunni orthodoxy have sided with those holding political power, and are therefore guilty of intellectual elitism. Adi Sasono and Dawam Rahardjo insist that the sub-discourse of civilizational Islam is insufficiently aware of the structural obstacles posed by the political-economic foundations of Weberian interpretations of Western modernity, which in the end do not offer liberty but—on the contrary—a new form of dominance.<sup>170</sup>

As someone who nevertheless wanted to keep the door open between civilizational and transformative Islam, Dawam Rahardjo developed a nuanced alternative theology, which navigates between the capitalist tendencies stimulated by the civilizationists' reliance on Weber and the openly Marxist proclivities of uncompromising transformationists such as Sasono. Although Rahardjo also harbours reservations towards the Weberian Developmentalism supported by his mentor Mukti Ali and by Nurcholish Madjid, he claimed to be a 'vulgar follower' of either Marxism or Dependency Theory.<sup>171</sup> Instead he has remained committed to a Qur'an-inspired ethics. Even though he never formulated a comprehensive theoretic framing for Qur'anic exegesis, the very fact that as an economist he ventured into the field of *tafsir* is remarkable in itself. Writings such as 'The Methodology of Tafsir: Searching for the Dynamics of the Qur'an' and his editorship of the journal *Ulumul Qur'an* clearly evince a sustained interest in Islamic scripture and a concerted effort to engage with its message. Rahardjo's motivation for this undertaking is a conviction that all Muslims, regardless of their background, education or intellectual aptitude, should enter into conversation with the Qur'an. In defiance of both traditional religious

scholars and modern Muslim academics, he agrees with other scientifically-minded intellectuals, such as the British–Pakistani Ziauddin Sardar, that a lack of proficiency in Arabic is no reason for disqualifying non-expert Muslims from interrogating their scriptures.<sup>172</sup> As an economist, Rahardjo is particularly interested in a sociological reflection on the Qur'an in order to tease out its ethical–economic injunctions. For that purpose he has studied the history of its revelation and identified key terms, which he then subjects to semantic analysis and intertextual examination. On the basis of these findings, Rahardjo suggests that the Qur'an has an emancipatory potential that transcends the dominance of ideology of secularism and modernization theory.

In an attempt to vindicate his own mentor Nurcholish Madjid, Munawar-Rachman concludes that Dawam Rahardjo's vision of Islamic ethics as a defense mechanism against the onslaught of the West is not all that different from that of the civilizationists. In spite of differences in focus and in formulating concrete objectives, the shared ethical concerns of rational, civilizational and transformative Islam offer a counter-culture or oppositional ideology that challenge dominant discourses modeled on the basis of uncritical acceptance of received accounts from the Islamic tradition. Ending on a more critical note, Munawar-Rachman also concludes that, when compared to the leftist Islamic ideologies of the Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi or the Indian thinker–activist Ali Asghar Engineer (1939–2013), Indonesian neo-modernism has not yet developed into a fully-fledged theology, let alone a praxis that takes it beyond a mere ethics of liberation.<sup>173</sup> This is where intellectuals from Munawar-Rachman's own generation are trying to leave their mark by moving from critique to progressive activist thinking.

### *Transforming Islam in twenty-first-century Indonesia*

As noted earlier, Muslim modernists from Muhammadiyah backgrounds are thought to be less interested in epistemological questions that shape discourses on religious doctrine, preferring to concentrate instead on purifying social-political structures.<sup>174</sup> However, its main representative in Indonesia, the Muhammadiyah, is not a monolithic organization. Cleansing Islamic practices of the contamination by deviations known as *takhayul*, *bid'a* and *churafat* is primarily a concern for the reactionary Ikhlas bloc, not the Muhammadiyah in general, as

insinuated by Ahmad Baso in his critique of Islamic neo-modernism. Moreover, both civilizational and transformative Islam evince the existence of a robust modernist Islamic counter-culture. Notwithstanding the organization's conservative turn after the 2005 general congress, this oppositional discourse continues to be developed further by third-generation postcolonial Muhammadiyah intellectuals.<sup>175</sup>

In 2003, the various strands of social theory and cultural criticism found in the discursive formations of civilizational and transformative Islam articulated by senior Muhammadiyah intellectuals such as Kuntowijoyo, Dawam Rahardjo, Munir Mul Khan, Amin Abdullah, but especially Moeslim Abdurrahman, converged in a set of ideas propagated by young cadres united in the Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (JIMM).<sup>176</sup> Sometimes they are also called the 'second Muhammadiyah' on account of their efforts to 're-intellectualize' the organization through a program founded on what they call the three pillars.<sup>177</sup> Very briefly, the first one is formed by JIMM's self-identification as a new social movement. Secondly, the network envisages using the structural hermeneutics and social theories found in the writings of intellectuals as different as Fazlur Rahman, Hanafi, Arkoun, Gramsci and Freire for the transformation of the Muhammadiyah from a univocal into a multivocal—read pluralist—organization. Finally, it redefines the function of the intellectual as bringing about change, acting not as mediator, but as an articulator effecting a social transformation.<sup>178</sup>

In this regard it is instructive to read the account of post-Islamic renewal thinking by one of JIMM's founding members. Illuminating different accents and points of attention in dealing with intellectual predecessors, Zuly Qodir offers an alternative to Ahmad Baso's Islamic post-traditionalism and Budhy Munawar-Rachman's Islamic neo-modernism. Unlike Baso, Qodir still subscribes to the view held by Greg Barton that Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid can both be considered as Islamic neo-modernists. In contrast to Munawar-Rachman, he presents transformative Islam not as a sub-category of Islamic neo-modernism, but as an entirely separate discourse which has branched off from earlier *pembaruan* thinking.<sup>179</sup> While agreeing with Munawar-Rachman on the important roles played by Kuntowijoyo and Dawam Rahardjo in formulating an Islamic social theory geared towards social transformation, he does not consider either one of them as the lynchpins between cultural and sociological understandings of

religion; instead he gives this role to Moeslim Abdurrahman as the most important intellectual mentor of JIMM.

It was Moeslim Abdurrahman's exposure to Islamic traditionalism that enabled him to develop ties with progressive NU cadres at P3M, and especially with the NU's chairman Abdurrahman Wahid, thus bringing the modernist and traditionalist intellectual streams closer together. The relationship was based on their shared appreciation of the critical theology of Hasan Hanafi, exemplified by his manifesto for a 'Leftist Islam'.<sup>180</sup> As noted earlier, the NU leader had written an introduction to the Indonesian translation of this text, while Moeslim Abdurrahman foregrounded the Egyptian philosopher in his introduction to a collection of essays written by JIMM activists.<sup>181</sup> During Ahmad Syafii Maarif's term as general chairman of the Muhammadiyah, Moeslim Abdurrahman continued his pioneering efforts towards making progressive thinking among modernist Muslims more compatible with the new post-traditionalist discourse developing in the NU. The founding of the Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity in 2003, and Abdurrahman's appointment as its first executive director, turned this organization into the key platform for JIMM, and helped forge closer bonds between young intellectuals from modernist and traditionalist backgrounds.<sup>182</sup>

JIMM members also credit Moeslim Abdurrahman with coining the term 'transformative Islam', reason enough for co-founder Zuly Qodir to identify him as the most important modernist Muslim theorist aside from Kuntowijoyo, on the grounds of his emphasis on the need for a home-grown Islamic social theory for Muslims to counter the dominant technologically- and bureaucratically-oriented Western theories of developmentalism and modernization. Like Budhy Munwar-Rachman, Zuly Qodir too recognizes the need for quarrying critically engaged theologies, sociologies and pedagogies of Western origin in order to develop this endogenous Islamic alternative. After all, as Kuntowijoyo had argued, throughout its history the Muslim world has constantly borrowed from other civilizations. In order to avoid the marginalization of religion from public life and prevent people's psychological alienation from their religious traditions, purely economic incentives to modernize need to be replaced by more basic values for human development. In this regard, Qodir also points at Moeslim Abdurrahman's interest in the practical applications of Latin American liberation theology, which he shared with Abdurrahman Wahid and Dawam

Rahardjo.<sup>183</sup> Liberation theology had also helped Kuntowijoyo and Abdurrahman to develop their ideal types of Prophetic Social Science and transformative Islam as functioning social theories capable of accommodating the transcendent in a historicized context. There is further agreement between Qodir and Munawar-Rachman in regard to the vindication of using Gramsci's neo-Marxist interpretation of the role of intellectuals, and what Qodir calls the analogy with Paulo Freire's 'Participatory Action Research' and his 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'.<sup>184</sup>

This is why Qodir presents Moeslim Abdurrahman's thinking as the nodal point between civilizational and transformative Islam. On the one hand, there is Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science where modernity's rupture between world and religion is mended by humanization and liberation as modern-day expressions of the Islamic imperative in 'propagating good and preventing evil' (*amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa nahi 'an-al-munkar*). This resistance against dichotomous or binary thinking in terms of the permissible (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*) points up an affinity with postmodernism in terms of advocating what Heelas has called a 'de-differentiation' in religious thinking.<sup>185</sup> On the other hand, there stands the very concern for the *dhu'afa dan mustadha'ifin* or the 'weak and oppressed', the Qur'anic allegories for poverty, injustice, backwardness and stagnation, a preoccupation which Moeslim Abdurrahman shared not only with his JIMM protégés, but also with the executor of Nurcholish Madjid's intellectual estate, Budhy Munawar-Rachman.<sup>186</sup> This is where progressive intellectuals from both traditionalist and modernist backgrounds are called upon to act as 'agents of social change' (*agen perubahan sosial*), and where discourse critiques under the heading of an Islamic theory of social transformation must be transmuted into agendas for concrete action.<sup>187</sup>

Going further back in time for the genesis of this progressive modernist Islamic discourse, Zuly Qodir does not look at Moeslim Abdurrahman's transformative Islam alone; he also recognizes the contributions by other intellectuals such as Djohan Effendi and Syafii Maarif, whose period as Muhammadiyah chairman had been so conducive to the rise of JIMM.<sup>188</sup> Like Ahmad Baso, Zuly Qodir too contends that—in his younger years—Syafii Maarif had close relations with Muhammad Natsir's DDII, and could therefore be regarded as initially having been a classical Islamic modernist. However, as Yudi Latif already noted, when working with Fazlur Rahman, both Syafii Maarif and Amien Rais were introduced to a new epistemic commu-



nity.<sup>189</sup> This expansion of their intellectual horizons took their thinking into a new direction. Rais must have surprised not just the Indonesian public, but also have given the DDII leadership a sense of déjà vu when in the 1980s he began explicitly rejecting the need for an Islamic state, just as Nurcholish Madjid had done in the 1970s. The progressive influence in the Muhammadiyah became so strong that at the organization's 1985 congress the Pancasila Doctrine was accepted as *Asas Tunggal*, or the sole foundational principle of the Indonesian state.

In comparison to Amien Rais, Zuly Qodir regards his successor Syafii Maarif as less of a political player and more inclined towards intellectual pursuits. As a scholar of Islam, Maarif's interest in the relationship between religion and modernity, and the place of Islam in Indonesia, revolve around three themes: The interface between Islam and humankind, the civilizational crisis affecting Islam, and the religion's political aspirations. Although Qodir discusses Maarif primarily under the heading of Islamic modernism, he adds that, because of his interest in the substantive rather than formal aspects of religion and his openness to *intra*-Islamic dialogue, because he does not think about modernity and tradition in terms of a dichotomy or binary opposition, Maarif would also fit into other categories of post-*pembaruan* thinking. He could be regarded as belonging to the historical-realist strand, but also as an exponent of what Syafi'i Anwar calls 'idealistic Islam'.<sup>190</sup> Zuly Qodir has also invoked the darker view of the human condition of Isaac Bashevis Singer's to sketch how Maarif sees the Qur'an as a means to restore the equilibrium between world, humankind and God. As any objective and scholarly examination of the reality of recent human history will show, this balance has been undermined by the competing forces of capitalist greed for money and communist ambition for power.<sup>191</sup> Maarif also attributes the current crisis affecting Islamic civilization to a lack of love, and that only a return to the message of the Qur'an can restore respect for human rights and justice. Resonating with the diagnosis propounded by the social theory of transformative Islam, he too sees the dominance of technological advances obscuring the moral dimensions of progress and human development. For Maarif the answer to reintegrating reason and love lies in the Qur'an.

Although, in terms of political thinking, the mature Syafii Maarif no longer fits in the Masyumi School, his adoption of a '*perspektif*

*Maudian*'—a reference to the former leader of Pakistan's Jamaat-e Islami, Abul A'la Maududi (1903–79)—still seems to echo a puritan understanding of Islam.<sup>192</sup> Qodir points out that it is the grounding of Maududi's moral vision in faith and good works that attracted Maarif to the Pakistani's thinking and that this has also implications for the role of the intellectual. Using the Qur'anic term *ulul albab*—the Indonesian rendition of *Ula al-Bab* or 'wise ones'—intellectuals are expected to be the guiding lights of the Muslim community in terms of knowledge and personal conduct. The consequence of such an interpretation is that intellectual activities are not value-free and that, therefore, 'morality forms a more important basis in the development of knowledge than technology'.<sup>193</sup> For the same reason, Syafii Maarif also subscribes to an anti-elitist reading of the Qur'an that is rather similar to that of Dawam Rahardjo, which leads him to criticize the Islamic jurists for designing political doctrines that run counter to its anti-hegemonic elan. Qodir concludes that Maarif's strategy envisages Islam as 'an ideal aspiration, not a political ideology'.<sup>194</sup> However, he also recognizes the realist in Maarif, and agrees that his advocacy for an alternative Islamic culture manifests itself in an '*intellectual breakthrough* that is of strategic value in making a future that is more just, compassionate, egalitarian, and therefore more Islamic'.<sup>195</sup>

Zuly Qodir's critique of modernist Islamic intellectuals and activism also extends to his more immediate predecessors from the second post-colonial generation, highlighting the differences both in terms of discourse and method between them and the intellectuals who had matured during the 1970s. Although he does not claim that the generation rising to prominence in the 1990s suffered from political disenfranchisement, as Yudi Latif has alleged, it cannot be ignored or denied that their point of gravity lies in academia, not mass organizations such as the NU and Muhammadiyah, nor in once powerful student organizations like the HMI, or campus mosques. To illustrate this different habitus, Qodir refers to Kuntowijoyo's essay collection *Muslim tanpa Masjid*—'Muslim without Mosque'.<sup>196</sup>

As discussed in the opening chapter, during the 1990s Indonesia was a country in flux. Although both accommodative and confrontational tendencies among Muslim activists continued, there was a marked change in the government's attitude towards Islam. The New Order's recognition of the significance of Islam stimulated different ways of thinking which sought to bridge the conceptual tension between Islam,

politics and the state, thus averting earlier political trauma by following a 'middle road' of substantive thinking about Islam.<sup>197</sup> Qodir refers to the more open-minded new generation emerging in the 1990s as a 'liberal Islamic school' (*mazhab Islam liberal*).<sup>198</sup> He calls their approach a 'conductive dialectics between Islam and state', resulting in what Robert Hefner has dubbed 'Civil Islam'.<sup>199</sup>

Although these realistic-accommodative and confrontational discourses did not disappear in the 1990s, Qodir's narrative concentrates on representatives of a substantive ethical discourse as an alternative to the conservative elements that control ICMI and to what Abdul Munir Mulkhan characterized as 'the process of secularizing santri education and the bureaucratization of the santris'.<sup>200</sup> In this climate, historical reality made first- and second-generation Muslim intellectuals adopt an accommodative-conformist disposition towards the New Order. Seeing no conflict between Pancasila and Islam, there was no need for an Islamic state. Moreover, as the New Order began changing its attitude, the political standing of the Muslims vastly improved, granting a position of strength they had not enjoyed since the last free elections of 1955. Among the proponents of this alternative substantivist-Islamic ethics, Qodir includes not only M. Amin Abdullah, Azyumardi Azra, Komaruddin Hidayat and Abdul Munir Mulkhan, but also the younger Budhy Munawar-Rachman. As a historian, Azra qualified the rivalries among the political elites as a '*contest of space*, not a *contest of religion*', while the writings of his successor as rector of UIN Jakarta, the philosopher Komaruddin Hidayat, draw on perennial philosophy.<sup>201</sup> Zuly Qodir pays ample attention to Amin Abdullah and Abdul Munir Mulkhan as the most important supporters of JIMM, after Moeslim Abdurrahman and Syafii Maarif. What unites these intellectuals is their agreement that:

The essence for political parties should be a political ethics, which is more important, not its formal shape. The dimension of universal values has to become the basis for party-political struggles, not whether it is an Islamic party or a 'nationalist-secular' one, such as Golkar, PDI-P, or PAN.<sup>202</sup>

Both Amin Abdullah and Abdul Munir Mulkhan are of the opinion that theology can be nothing else but a product of human thought, reflecting a specific way of thinking about religion conditioned by history. That means that also revelation is a product of theological thinking colored by the demands and challenges of a certain period in time, and that scripture must be read in its historical context.<sup>203</sup> Amin

Abdullah proposes to look at the relationship between the Qur'an and social reality through the lens of a methodological process—more specifically an inductive, argumentative and demonstrative method that accounts for thinking as a dialogical and historical process.<sup>204</sup> This focus on method resonates strongly with the approaches of new *ulama* such as Said Aqil Siraj and the Islamic post-traditionalists who were inspired by him. This attention to process and methodology feeds into Abdullah and Mulkhan's prioritization of raising and addressing substantive questions on 'the morals and ethics of religion, rather than the formalization of religion into the political conduct of a nation'.<sup>205</sup> As to their association with the Muhammadiyah, Qodir observes that:

As a 'new generation' they are not so much busy with the theological questions which were debated in the previous decade, either concerning renewal thinking or, within the Muhammadiyah, in connection with the issue of Takhayyul, Bid'a and Churafat (TBC). In their decade the topics for debate are in the field of political or social praxis which needed to be actualized within a plural society.<sup>206</sup>

Even though they share the inclusivist viewpoint of their predecessors from the 1970s and 1980s, many of the intellectuals who matured during the 1990s and early 2000s are more focussed on applied thinking and the dissemination of ideas on universal themes such as democracy, justice, community development and bureaucracy. The sweeping ideas introduced by the likes of Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, and before them Harun Nasution and Mukti Ali, may have caused Indonesian Muslim intellectualism to run out of breath, as Kuntowijoyo put it. However, their successors are aware that these grand narratives need to be transposed into more concrete intellectual projects and then translated into plans of action for transforming Indonesian society.

### *New discursive formations for the twenty-first century*

This chapter has shown that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Muslim intellectualism remains grounded in serious epistemological considerations resulting in new discursive formations of progressive Islamic thinking jointly formulated by young intellectuals who continue to self-identify with the NU and the Muhammadiyah. The issues at hand for a generation living through a decade of tremendous change have less to do with finding formal ways of accommodating

## THE WEIGHT OF THE PREDECESSORS

Islam in the political context of contemporary Indonesia. To them it is not about establishing an Islamic state or introducing Islamic law, but about democratization, tolerance, social-economic equality and citizen participation through education and stimulation of critical thinking about these themes; in short, issues which have lost nothing in currency, but—on the contrary—only gained in urgency as Indonesia moves from reformation to the consolidation of its political structures and institutions.



## DEBATING SECULARISM

### ISLAM, STATEHOOD AND DEMOCRACY

At the beginning of this book, I stated that what is ultimately at stake in the debates on secularism, pluralism and liberalism is what kind of country Indonesia wants to be. One commentator on the debate, which began to unfold in the wake of the release of the notorious MUI fatwa 7 in the Summer of 2005, noted that: ‘At this time, the challenge for progressive Muslim intellectuals is how to safeguard secularization in Indonesia for the future, especially as a means to ensure basic freedoms (or what is called “liberalism”) and religious pluralism’.<sup>1</sup>

The fatwa condemning secularism, pluralism and liberalism as un-Islamic became a very divisive issue for Indonesian Muslims. Presiding over the drafting and issuing of the document were the reactionary NU scholar Ma‘ruf Amin and the increasingly conservative Sahal Mahfudh, at the time head of the NU’s Consultative Council and also general chairman of MUI. Meanwhile, other leading figures in the NU, rallying behind former executive chairman and ex-president Abdurrahman Wahid, rejected the ruling. The controversy surrounding this fatwa reflected the growing polarization within the NU. A showdown between conservatives and liberals in the NU had already been signalled by Zuhairi Misrawi in an essay written in 2000 under the title ‘Conservatism: Challenging Liberal Islam in the NU’.<sup>2</sup> A similar division was detectable in the Muhammadiyah, where the official leader-

ship, dominated by the conservatives around the newly elected chairman Din Syamsuddin (who used to be MUI's secretary general and has since stepped up as its chairman), supported the MUI fatwa, whereas the young progressives of JIMM and intellectuals such as Dawam Rahardjo voiced strong objections. In the case of the latter this resulted in his messy expulsion from the Muhammadiyah. Aside from conservative elements in the NU and Muhammadiyah, also reactionary organizations such as DDII, MMI, FPI and HTI, and even ICMI, stood squarely behind MUI.<sup>3</sup>

Within the triadic constellation of secularism, pluralism and liberalism, secularism tends to be used as a gloss for the multi-layered interrelations between religion (in this case Islam), the polity and civil society. Consequently, some of the themes addressed under the general heading of secularism spill over into issues that could also be appropriately raised under pluralism and liberalism. The debate on secularism itself can be broken down into a number of sub-themes with specific relevance to the Indonesian context.

Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, for many Muslims the troublesome nexus of the Pancasila–Jakarta Charter initially remained at the core of the postcolonial Indonesian project; forming two sides of the same coin when it came to what Robert Cribb sees as the two enduring themes in Indonesian history since independence in 1945: ‘aspirations for justice and modernity’.<sup>4</sup> New aspects arising in post-1998 Indonesia include a suggestion to draw guidance from the Medina Charter—the covenant concluded in 622CE between the Muslim community and the various Arab and Jewish tribes in Medina—rather than the Jakarta Charter which had been envisaged as an integral part of the 1945 constitution.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, organizations such as HTI and MMI advocate the restoration of the historical caliphate, or at least the establishment of a regional South East Asian equivalent. These initiatives in particular give political debates among Muslim intellectuals an entirely new twist, because the proposed alternative polity calls into question the role of democracy, which—in spite of all their internal differences—was never a real matter of dispute within the bloc of Islamic political parties in early independent Indonesia.<sup>6</sup>

### *Theorizing the state in post-Suharto Indonesia*

In order to find one's bearings in the discussions of the last fifteen years, it is instructive to take a closer look at two studies of the rela-



tion between the state and Islam in Indonesia by political scientists who have also actively participated in the debates on statehood and democracy. Drawing on Mohammed Arkoun's notion of the 'aesthetics of reception' and Marshall Hodgson's suggested 'polyinterpretability' of Islam's teachings, Bahtiar Effendy, a member of the Ciputat School and now dean of the faculty of political and social sciences at Jakarta's UIN, credits the new Islamic intellectualism that has developed since the 1970s with making a real difference in overcoming the traditional antagonism between Islam and the state by concentrating on a substantivist, rather than legalistic and formalistic, conceptualization of Islamic political theory.<sup>7</sup> His analysis distinguishes a three-point agenda, consisting of theological renewal, political-bureaucratic reform and social transformation, which Muslim intellectuals continue to elaborate until today.<sup>8</sup> Effendy finds it important that 'Muslims enjoy some degree of confidence to allow any ideas, however unconventional they may be, to be expressed and communicated freely'.<sup>9</sup> Examples of that have been discussed in the previous chapter, where much of the discourse critiques by young intellectuals were shaped by the often controversial theories and ideas of innovative thinkers such as Mohammed Arkoun, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri and Hasan Hanafi, which travel from one end of the Muslim world to circulate among Muslim intellectuals elsewhere and find localized applications.

Although Luthfi Assyaukanie, a research associate at the Freedom Institute and lecturer at Paramadina University, takes a different approach, his analysis of Muslim responses to political change is also partly grounded in the work of Mohammed Arkoun, but additionally draws on other intellectuals as different and diverse as Fazlur Rahman (1919–88); the Kenyan-born scholar of Islam, Ali Mazrui (1933–2014); India's leading Muslim advocate of secularism, the late Ali Asghar Engineer (1939–2013); the Iranian philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush (b.1945); and two other intellectuals of South Asian origin: the British-Pakistani Ziauddin Sardar (b.1951) and the India-born political scientist Muqtedar Khan (b.1966).<sup>10</sup>

Aside from these inter-regional intellectual contacts and exchanges, Nurcholish Madjid's legacy as the initiator of the Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking remains important for the continuous rereading and interpretation of Islamic ideas on the relation between religion and politics in Indonesia. As I have explained elsewhere in much greater detail, his argumentation for delinking statehood and

party politics from religion is a much more complex and multi-layered convergence of theological, political (ideological) and epistemological arguments than the often-quoted and notorious slogan he launched in 1970: 'Islam Yes! Islamic Party No!'<sup>11</sup> Madjid's reasoning was grounded in two key Islamic doctrines: the absolute oneness of God (*tawhid*) and the Qur'anic notion of humankind as God's vicegerent on earth (*khalifat Allah fi al-ardh*).<sup>12</sup>

In presenting the social-political objectives of this new Islamic intellectualism, Effendy invokes further Qur'anic dictums to illustrate that proponents of the politically more provocative social transformation school 'at least theoretically—are Qur'anic-centred in the sense that their political ideas and practices are connected to, if not rooted in, Islamic values'.<sup>13</sup> The injunction 'to propagate virtue and prevent vice' (*amr bi al-ma'ruf wa nahyu 'an al-munkar*) and the verse referring to 'a fair land and an indulgent Lord' (*baldatun thayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur*), which the Masyumi Party had already used as oppositional jargon in their campaign for an Indonesian Islamic state, also fit within the paradigm of Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science and Dawam Rahardjo's engagement in Qur'an exegesis.<sup>14</sup> The difference between Masyumi's Islamist agenda and the progressive concept of transformative Islam is that:

In today's Indonesian political Islam [these injunctions] are no longer articulated in the context of ideological and symbolic subjectivism (that is, Islamic state or Islamic ideology). Instead, they are translated and decoded into several agendas pertinent to the interests of the Indonesian society in general, including a number of broader issues such as democratization, religious and political tolerance, socio-economic egalitarianism, and political participation.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to what Effendy calls the subjective articulation of ideologies and Islamic symbols by Islamists, this transformation of Qur'anic values into inclusive and integrative agendas of political action reflects an important shift from a theocentric perspective to an anthropocentric focus, and thus an objectification of Islam in this-worldly existence, reflected in a diversification of interpretations.<sup>16</sup> This objectification is found not only in a generic theory of secularization which, as Armando Salvatore has pointed out, formed the main vehicle for Durkheim's 'neo-holistic sociology', but can also be detected in its transpositions into concrete Islamic contexts such as Kuntowijoyo's argumentation for the acceptance of the Pancasila Doctrine as the sole

ideological foundation of the Indonesian state (*asas tunggal*).<sup>17</sup> This made Indonesia into a country that does not want to be identified as either Islamic or secular, but as a religious state.

Most of Effendy's diachronic account looks back at the long-term impact of developments set in motion during the New Order years when sustained repression of open Islamic political activism forced Muslims to explore alternative ways of engagement. The key contrast of the post-Suharto period highlighted by Effendy is the unhindered proliferation of Islamic parties. Effendy's interpretation of this development follows Nurcholish Madjid's suggestion that due to the political openings and liberalization brought about by *Reformasi* it was to be expected that Muslims would push for the establishment of Islamic parties, leading Madjid to compare them to 'children who just got new toys'.<sup>18</sup> Effendy cautions against the tendency to stigmatize these political parties by insinuating that they wish to establish a theocracy or at the very least absorb Islamic law into the country's legal system. In fact, since 1999, none of them has explicitly called for an Islamic state, and only PPP, PBB and a few smaller parties actually campaigned for the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter into the new constitution.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, their disappointing electoral results demonstrate that there is little popular support for such agendas.

A greater threat comes from organizations emerging not so much as part of the transition to democracy, but as a result of the precarious social and political circumstances affecting political-religious thinking in the immediate aftermath of regime change. Without any clear set of rules as to how the political game is to be played in such unstable transition periods, the resulting uncertainties will stimulate the rise of much coarser political discourses. These come from such quarters as FPI, FKASWJ, KISDI and MMI—movements urging in very pertinent terms for a more prominent place for Islamic law in Indonesian society and advocating the establishment of an Islamic state modeled after the historical caliphate.<sup>20</sup> Their confrontational and defiant style can—at least to some degree—be attributed to a '*delayed psychological response*' to the authoritarianism and repression of the preceding era.<sup>21</sup>

Bahtiar Effendy shares Kuntowijoyo's concerns that the trends set in motion in the post-Suharto years might undo some of the perhaps unforeseen positive outcomes of the New Order's repression of political Islam. In this reading, Suharto's clampdown provided the incentive to diversify the political meaning of Islam, especially a shift towards

using the 'potential and energy in areas of strategic interest such as human resource development'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the retreat from party politics had 'played a pivotal role in establishing a relatively amicable relationship between Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama', while the reduced significance of pillarization of the political scene in comparison to the Sukarno years had helped ease the dichotomy between *santri* and *abangan* as well.<sup>23</sup> Kuntowijoyo was concerned that the return of Islamic party politics would jeopardize these positive achievements. He envisaged a collapse of social cohesion as the Muslim community disintegrates as a consequence of the myopic pursuit of short-term political objectives, whereby idealist aspirations and a return to political-religious symbolism undermine the achievements of the last thirty years. Effendy agrees with Kuntowijoyo's alarmist view of the re-emergence of Islamic parties as a possible political setback, because the narrow understanding of the role of Islam in public life that will inevitably accompany this phenomenon is bound to backfire on the influence of creative thinkers such as Kuntowijoyo, resulting in the alienation of younger generations of progressive Muslim intellectuals.

However, as a representative of this younger generation, Luthfi Assyaukanie thinks that this kind of resistance to Islamism does not go far enough: The opportunity offered by the regime change of 1998–9 must be used to push the democratization of Indonesia's political system to the next stage. The forceful argument he presents in his book *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* is driven by an interpretation of Islamic political discourse in Indonesia as a 'history of progress and transformation towards moderation'.<sup>24</sup> At the same time the book is also intended as a sociology of knowledge, which takes Karl Mannheim's notion of utopia—rather than the overused concept of ideology—as a starting point for examining the philosophical foundations and limitations of three different models for a democratic polity in Indonesia, referred to as the Islamic Democratic State (IDES), Religious Democratic State (RDS) and Liberal Democratic State (LDS).<sup>25</sup> As an exercise in political theory, Assyaukanie's discussion is circumscribed by the basic assumption that all three models accept democracy as the best available system of governance.<sup>26</sup> In spite of that shared premise, the proponents of the various models do not agree on such issues as secularization and the place of religion in political life, the role of Islamic law in Indonesian society, the reach of pluralism, and the position of religious minorities and women.

*Jakarta Charter redux, Medina Charter rising*

Assyaukanie argues that even though the Islamic Liberal State (IDS) model had been losing ground since the 1980s, the fall of the New Order Regime offered its proponents an opportunity to try once again to 'maximize their Islamic demand in accordance with the rule of law and the Constitution'. With the emergence of a plethora of Islamic parties in 1999, prospects for 'a democratic way to revive the Jakarta Charter' initially appeared to be good.<sup>27</sup> The most important Muslim intellectuals to make that case were Deliar Noer (1926–2008), a US-trained political scientist and confidant of the former Masyumi leadership; and Yusril Ihza Mahendra, a legal scholar and leader of the PBB, which positions itself as heir to the Masyumi legacy. In doing so they deliberately took 'an opposite stance from liberal Muslim intellectuals such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid'.<sup>28</sup>

Following the disappointing results of the Islamic parties in the first free elections of 1999, in which Deliar Noer's Islamic Community Party (*Partai Ummat Islam*, PUI) did not even make the required threshold, while PPP and PBB did not acquire more than twelve per cent of the parliamentary seats, the miniscule Islamist bloc also failed to canvass sufficient support from the larger Muslim parties affiliated with Muhammadiyah and NU to get the notorious 'Seven Words' of the Jakarta Charter accepted as part of the new Constitution in 2002.<sup>29</sup> This forced reactionary politicians and intellectuals such as Noer, Mahendra and newcomer Hidayat Nur Wahid (b.1960) of the *Partai Keadilan* or Justice Party (now renamed Justice and Prosperity Party: *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*, PKS) to rethink their positions and change their approach towards making Indonesia a more Islamic country. Instead of earlier preoccupations with the formal aspects of integrating the Jakarta Charter into the preamble of the Constitution, the newly emerging 'contemporary debate was more concerned with the special rights of Muslims and the obligation for the government to implement *syari'ah*'.<sup>30</sup> Realizing that the Jakarta Charter would not become part of Article 29 because of the opposition from both moderate Muslim parties and the non-Muslim segment of the population, Hidayat Nur Wahid sided with Amien Rais's PAN in favor of a different, more inclusive wording, which stated that the Indonesian state is 'based on belief in One Almighty God with the obligation upon the followers of *each* religion to carry out its religious teachings'.<sup>31</sup> One of no less than four

alternative wordings tabled in the deliberations on the expansion of the original text of Article 29, this particular formulation was intended to deflect any semblance of Muslim exclusivism or demand for preferential treatment.<sup>32</sup> However, in the final instance, in August 2002, parliament decided to leave Article 29 unchanged.<sup>33</sup> According to Assyaukanie, the motivation of the PKS in supporting Amien Rais's alternative text points towards an interesting convergence:

One thing that must be noted is that the alternative proposal strongly bears the spirit of pluralist Islam. Hidayat Nurwahid, who then chaired the PK(S), considered the alternative proposal a reflection of the Madinah Charter. In contemporary Islamic political discourse in Indonesia, the term 'Madinah Charter' (*piagam Madinah*) is widely used by those in the circle of the Islamic renewal movement.<sup>34</sup>

In his explanation as to why first-generation postcolonial intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid, Syafi'i Anwar, Dawam Rahardjo and Djohan Effendi supported Pancasila, Bahtiar Effendy was one of the first to draw attention to the 'intriguing proposition' that, because it upholds the same principles of monotheism, social justice and the need for consultation put forward in the teaching of Islam, Pancasila is in fact comparable to—though by no means exactly the same as—the Constitution of Medina.<sup>35</sup> The juxtaposition of Pancasila and Medina Charter has important consequences for the relationship with other—non-Muslim—segments of Indonesian society, providing a doctrinal underpinning for an inclusive understanding of Indonesia as a multicultural society and thus a vindication for supporting religious pluralism.<sup>36</sup>

Although Assyaukanie judges the pragmatic decision of the PKS to change its stance as a positive step towards a more inclusivist position, as a proponent of the IDS model Assyaukanie thinks it does not go far enough in the light of what real pluralism entails, because for intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid and Djohan Effendi, the Medina Charter stressed the need for genuine religious pluralism.<sup>37</sup> In this context it is also worth mentioning an observation by Bernhard Platzdasch. He notes that as a demonstration of its willingness to compromise and its desire to become a 'binding element (*menjadi unsur perekat*)' and 'national unifier', the PKS downplays the notion of *ghazwul fikh* in its *dakwah* activities, thus toning down its hostility towards ideas of non-Islamic provenance. Also its advocacy of using Islamic law as a binding system of values is markedly absent from its public statements and generally reserved for internal consumption only.<sup>38</sup> For that reason,

Masdar Hilmi considers the acceptance by the PKS of the Medina Charter instead of the Jakarta Charter as ‘one of the most important but controversial breakthroughs in the development of Islamic political ideas in Indonesia’.<sup>39</sup> In spite of the fact that what he calls ‘utopian Islamists’ see this as an act of betrayal, PKS leader Hidayat felt vindicated because the Medina Charter offers a more suitable blueprint on which to build a civil society in Indonesia.<sup>40</sup> In Masdar Hilmi’s reading, ‘it seems the PKS wishes to integrate religious values and Indonesian cultural norms into a single coherent national identity’.<sup>41</sup> Another commentator, Nadirsyah Hosen, suggests that this reflects a shift in attitude on the part of reactionary Muslim activists, in terms of a rapprochement of the ‘Third Way’ identified by Yudi Latif. Navigating between their original integralist objectives and the wall of separation demanded by hard secularism, with this alternative the PKS ‘seeks mutual cooperation to acknowledge and preserve the harmonious existence of religion and state’.<sup>42</sup>

A serious or—what Nadirsyah Hosen calls—‘substantive approach’ to the content of the Jakarta Charter and what shari‘a really means did not take off until the ‘hope to Islamize the state through the Jakarta Charter became irrelevant’.<sup>43</sup> This stands in marked contrast to the, in my view, erroneous judgement by Hosen that ‘*syariah* is not the most important ingredient of an Islamic state’, which conflicts with the evidence provided by the unfolding events, in part furnished in Hosen’s own account, and the observation preceding his conclusion that Indonesia’s ‘Islamic political parties did not want to establish an Islamic state and asked only for the right to practice Islamic law’.<sup>44</sup> With the prospects for the acceptance of the Jakarta Charter crushed, the campaigners for gaining legal status for shari‘a within Indonesia’s political and judicial system had no option but to change tack too. However, the various proponents had different opinions over how to move forwards. The views of scholars such as Deliar Noer and Yusril Ihza Mahendra are markedly different from those of the MMI or Laskar Jihad leadership. Noer argued that implementation of Islamic law is not about enforcing its penal code, but rather about improving social conditions, poverty relief and educational reform. Mahendra does not even insist any longer on the explicit introduction of Islamic law, but suggested during his term in office as Justice Minister that it should be recognized as one of the sources of legal reform.<sup>45</sup> Nadirsyah Hosen’s own reading of such a substantive approach as advocating ‘an

emancipated understanding of the *syari'ah*, stressing its original meaning as "path" or guide, rather than a detailed legal code' contradicts his final conclusion that formal Islamic statehood mattered more to the reactionary Islamic parties than the effective implementation of Islamic law.<sup>46</sup> Even though other third-generation commentators, such as Luthfi Assyaukanie, are still convinced that the ultimate aim of the PBB and PKS remains the implementation of Islamic law, he agrees that Noer's and Mahendra's changing views of shari'a are moving closer to the substantive interpretations of liberal Muslim intellectuals than to the convictions of other supporters and advocates of the Jakarta Charter.<sup>47</sup> This also brings the debate on Islamic law closer to a much more principled discussion on the exact nature of shari'a, with Luthfi Assyaukanie even claiming that in this Indonesian context '*shari'ah* is a direct derivation from the Jakarta Charter'.<sup>48</sup>

#### *A religious or liberal democratic state?*

While the model for an Islamic Democratic State (IDS) has become largely obsolete with the demise of the Masyumi Party in 1960, Assyaukanie's alternative model of a Religious Democratic State (RDS) no longer subscribes to the need for a particular Islamic polity. Instead it understands Islam as a religion of morality providing 'transcendental ethic values for human life', rather than a political theory prescribing a concrete form of statehood.<sup>49</sup> The core foundation of this model is the conviction that religion forms a 'vital element in communal life' which does not need to be translated into a specifically Islamic form of governance.<sup>50</sup> To a large extent spurred on by the New Order and its insistence that Pancasila is recognized as *asas tunggal* by all political actors, the theorists behind this model subscribe to that principle, but also to the simultaneous rejection of secularism as an ideology.<sup>51</sup> The RDS model has remained particularly popular with senior figures in the two Muslim mass organizations. Assyaukanie singles out former Muhammadiyah chairmen Amien Rais and Ahmad Syafii Maarif, as well as leading intellectuals Dawam Rahardjo and Kuntowijoyo, as being among its main proponents. In NU circles, the model was mainly supported by older moderates such as Sahal Mahfudh and Ali Yafie, both exponents of a group of *ulama* who have grown more conservative as they advanced in age.

In Lutfi Assyaukanie's analysis, the difference between the RDS and Liberal Democratic State (LDS) models lies in the extent to which reli-



gion should play a role in politics and government.<sup>52</sup> As a co-founder of the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), it is not surprising that he prefers the LDS model because it gives state and society 'total freedom to perform their respective roles separately'.<sup>53</sup> In this reasoning, the major weakness of the RDS model is that it leaves certain contradictions and dilemmas unresolved when it comes to safeguarding the inherent plurality of Indonesia society.<sup>54</sup> In effect, this means that where proponents of a religious state draw the line at secularization, those in favor of liberal democracy not only accept secularization as a given but are actively advocating the process. Even though the intellectual roots of the LDS model lie in the same 1970s *Pembaruan* Movement that also inspired the RDS model, in the face of the emergence of new Islamic political parties and other actors with more explicit Islamization agendas, a younger generation of Muslim intellectuals is now fervently speaking out in favor of liberal democracy, challenging any attempts to mix religion and politics. For them, 'the principle of pluralism lies in the separation of the role of religion and the state'.<sup>55</sup> For that reason, they oppose not only those who campaign for an Islamic state or wish to revive the Jakarta Charter; they criticize all 'religious bills whose essence is to let the state interfere in Muslim religious life'.<sup>56</sup> As we shall see in the next chapter, this last point has resulted in heated debates on the status of shari'a.

*Secularism, secularization and liberalism: ambiguities and obscurities*

Aside from defining the Indonesian master narrative on state and Islam during the final decades of the twentieth century, Nurcholish Madjid's explanation of secularism as an ideology and secularization as a social process that is inextricably linked to modernization also remains an important touchstone in Muslim debates on thematic subplots such as democratization and civil liberties.

In the trilogy which Budhy Munawar-Rachman compiled to elaborate the arguments in favor of secularism, liberalism and pluralism, it is not surprising that, as the executor of Nurcholish Madjid's intellectual legacy, he remains faithful to his mentor when tracing the evolution of these closely connected concepts and themes. Beginning with Talcott Parsons' description of secularization as the outcome of a 'structural differentiation in society', Munawar-Rachman also refers to Robert Bellah and Harvey Cox, whose ideas played a prominent role

in shaping Nurcholish Madjid's view of the separation between worldly and religious affairs, which is said to liberate humanity from religion, metaphysics or transcendent concerns in dealing with worldly questions.<sup>57</sup> Heraldng a change of character in religious orientation, Parsons stressed the point that while this differentiation resulted in the political elimination of religious organizations, this does not mean that religious values lose their power as such. In marked contrast to the definition by Nurcholish Madjid's main interlocutor on the subject, the American theologian Harvey Cox, Munawar-Rachman insists that secularism does not necessarily refer to an ideology, but to a general worldview formally accepted by a given society. Whereas this alternative definition adds more to the confusion than it resolves, Munawar-Rachman nevertheless acknowledges Cox's pervasive influence on Nurcholish Madjid's interpretation of secularization as 'not a static notion, but a continuous process'.<sup>58</sup>

In his own writings on the subject, Nurcholish Madjid argued that the conflation of the sacred and the profane is actually demeaning to religion: nothing short of an act of blasphemy and—in Islamic contexts—a violation of the core principle of *tawhid*. Dawam Rahardjo has described this uncompromising interpretation as a manifestation of Nurcholish Madjid's 'radical monotheism'.<sup>59</sup> Reflecting the continuing and widespread influence of this view, similar arguments are still voiced by Muslim intellectuals of subsequent generations and from varying backgrounds. The prominent Islamic post-traditionalist Rumadi repeats Madjid's claim that those people who believe that it is possible to regulate the status of a religion or the divine through a state's constitution are 'actually debasing religion or God'.<sup>60</sup> In an interview with Budhy Munawar-Rachman, the academic and progressive Muhammadiyah intellectual Abdul Munir Mulkhan explained that:

[...] secularism has two aspects: theoretical and factual. Theoretically speaking, secularism really does not reject religion. That religious issues must be kept apart from those of the state is certainly true. However, that does not mean [the state] becomes anti-religious. In fact, we can observe an inconsistency in Indonesia and in other Muslim countries. Formally, they reject secularism, but in practice they do make a distinction between religious and worldly affairs [...] Eventually, all religious issues are secular issues, because religion (Islam) forms a guideline for life in this world for humans who are still alive and not yet dead (*hudan lil-nās*), and thus they become public issues.<sup>61</sup>

Other second- and third-generation progressive intellectuals as different from each other as Bahtiar Effendy, Luthfi Assayaukanie and

Ahmad Baso also emphasize the fundamental difference between secularization as a ‘liberating development’ and secularism ‘as a new closed worldview which functions very much like a new religion’—the very phrase that Nurcholish Madjid had borrowed from Harvey Cox’s seminal book, *The Secular City*.<sup>62</sup> Despite these differences of opinion, they all share the view that secularization constitutes a liberating development which will help the Muslim community to distinguish between transcendental and temporal values, thus offering a way out of the same conundrum faced by other religious traditions with closed worldviews. Whether at the time the distinction between secularism and secularization was really lost on or wilfully ignored by Nurcholish Madjid’s ideological opponents because it was not derived from Islamic sources but from a Harvard-based Christian theologian is only of secondary importance. Confronted with relentless opposition from his detractors, and their persistent conflation of secularization with secularism, a change did occur in Nurcholish Madjid’s vocabulary. Budhy Munawar-Rachman notes that the addition of the term ‘demythologization’, as a supposedly less offensive alternative to Madjid’s idiomatic repertoire, does not change the fact that it still refers to the same unavoidable process of replacing a theocentric with an anthropocentric worldview.<sup>63</sup> Also Effendy observed that in his later years:

[...] Nurcholish Madjid no longer employs the controversial term “secularization”. Thanks to the indirect intellectual encouragement of similar understanding [*sic!*] of “secularization”, as promulgated by a number of prominent and influential sociologists, such as Talcott Parsons and—more importantly—Robert N. Bellah, he has been able to smoothly rephrase the term “secularization” as “radical devaluation” or “desacralization”.<sup>64</sup>

In Muhammadiyah circles, prominent proponents of democratization along the lines of the RDS model remain doubtful as to whether secularization is desirable to begin with. The organization’s former chairman Syafii Maarif is sceptical of secular thinking on the grounds of its alleged over-reliance on human reason. Stressing the philosophical rather than political dimensions of secularization, he considers it contradictory to all religions, not just Islam.<sup>65</sup> However, in Muslim contexts it creates a further complication because the distinctions between state and religion, and between the public and private spheres, are allegedly less clear-cut than in other religious settings. As a result of these ambiguities, Islam has not only positive sides; it can also become a source of social and political conflict. On the other hand, the

potential ambivalence of the role of religion in the public sphere is also the reason why Maarif is unreservedly opposed to an Islamic state, in particular when this means the introduction and enforcement of Islamic law. Still, even though the Qur'an does not provide a blueprint for a specific polity, it can act as a moral compass in conceiving an appropriate political system for a predominantly Muslim society like Indonesia's.<sup>66</sup> In the 1980s, Amien Rais was still echoing the same opinions as earlier critics of Nurcholish Madjid that there is no difference between secularism and secularization, and that both are equally damaging to the integrity of Muslim societies. Amien Rais also brings up another, more general argument: namely that current social-scientific research is proving Durkheim and Weber wrong in their predictions that modernization is inevitably accompanied by secularization. In an interview with Luthfi Assyaukanie in 2004, even Dawam Rahardjo added his voice to the chorus, raising concerns not only over the supposedly anti-religious purport of secularization. Citing France and the United States as examples, he insisted that it can even endanger democracy itself and jeopardize the upholding of human rights when the freedom to express religious views publicly is curtailed.<sup>67</sup>

This view is not shared by younger Muhammadiyah-affiliated intellectuals such as former UIN Jakarta rector Azyumardi Azra. He makes a distinction between the 'unfriendly' secularism represented by French laicism and the 'friendly' variant found in the United States, where a balanced partnership between religion and state is in fact enshrined in its constitution. Religion-friendly secularism walks a middle road between freedom of expression (including religious beliefs) and respect for the rights of others. In Azra's view this has made the USA a multi-religious country in the true sense of the word. American secularity is also different from the religion-unfriendly attitude displayed by Turkey since the time of Atatürk. There state and religion are mixed up in a different way, because the government actually enacted legislation explicitly prohibiting certain religious practices, such as the use of Arabic and wearing the veil in public places, as well as the use of titles with Islamic connotations. Progressive Muslims in Indonesia are opposed to such disregard for local culture, supporting instead the integration of secularism within the Indonesian context. Speaking to Budhy Munawar-Rachman on the same subject, Azra's counterpart at UIN Yogyakarta, the philosopher M. Amin Abdullah, proposed a comparative historical study of the Indonesian discourse on secularism in order to investigate

its intellectual and organizational dimensions. Such an investigation will also evince that it is more accurate to speak of cyclical patterns in the levels of religiosity than an irreversible linear decline.<sup>68</sup>

*Refining the secularization thesis: differentiation and deprivatization*

The suggestion to re-examine the phenomenon of secularization and its implications for secularist ideologies is very much influenced by the writings of José Casanova, which have had a tremendous impact on progressive Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia. Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World* was a landmark book. Rather than considering the classical secularization thesis as a unified phenomenon, more accurately he fine-tunes it with a new proposition made up of refutations of the three persistent sub-theses of the classical secularization theory: The separation of church and state, the decline of religion and the privatization of religion.<sup>69</sup> His suggestion that it is more accurate to speak of a functional differentiation between political and religious authority than an outright separation of state and religion as such has implications for the understanding of the regulation of religion in the public and private spheres respectively. Privately, people's beliefs must be left alone, as they should be allowed to live in accordance with their own convictions without interference by any public institutions. When speaking of the public realm in Indonesia the key words used by progressive intellectuals are 'equality and equivalence' (*kesamaan dan kesetaraan*). These two notions should regulate inter-human contestation in the public domain, including deliberations on religious issues.<sup>70</sup> In his dismissal of MUI's Fatwa 7, Dawam Rahardjo reiterates that differentiation in the context of the secularization process is something other than separation, and that it is neither anti-religious nor the cause for a decline of religion, an erroneous perception also dispelled by other recent contributions to scholarship on the matter.<sup>71</sup>

Aside from being influenced by Casanova, Amin Abdullah's elaboration of this privatization of religion also draws on Wilfred Cantwell Smith's distinction between faith and tradition. Whereas the former is confined to the internal domain of the 'ineffable' and 'transcendental', tradition refers to the external dimension of religions.<sup>72</sup> Reading Casanova's deprivatization of religion in this light, Amin Abdullah contends that this only refers to political agendas. However, while individuals' private beliefs remain untouched, religious traditions can

still play a role in the public sphere in terms of morality. Because of these ethical underpinnings, it is almost unavoidable for political thinking to cross that 'threshold called religion'.<sup>73</sup> It is because of the difficulty of distinguishing clearly between the individual and social functions of religion that Casanova argues that it is more accurate to speak of a differentiation than a separation. Such a reformulation of the secularization thesis neither undermines the basic premise that it is part of the modernization process nor the idea of progress. For Amin Abdullah that is reason to put the improvement of religious education at the top of his agenda, with the state acting only as a facilitator.<sup>74</sup>

Rather than marginalizing religion or reducing its role to the private sphere, Budhy Munawar-Rachman echoes Casanova's alternative formulation of secularization as a functional differentiation, which distinguishes the role of institutionalized religion from the political function of the state. Referencing the writings of the Sudanese jurist and theorist of human rights Abdullahi an-Na'im (b.1946), he suggests that religion can still offer the principles underlying shari'a as the moral underpinnings of public policy, but legislation itself must be a matter of public reasoning and subject to constitutional constraints and universal human rights standards.<sup>75</sup> Although no longer defining the overall structure of public life, within the Indonesian context religion remains an important source of inspiration. As Fachry Ali, another member of the Ciputat School, explains: 'the separation of state and religion is still not possible because of [Indonesia's] limited resourcefulness in terms of ideas'.<sup>76</sup> While it is possible to borrow the concept of democracy from the West, when it comes to other issues, such as justice for example, the only option for Indonesians is to draw on their religions as a source of inspiration for making sense of the world and develop a code of conduct for how to handle themselves. This applies both at the individual and collective level, as well as in relation to people who are similar and those who are different from them.

As a further indication of the generational gaps in the Muslim modernist camp, JIL activist Luthfi Assyaukanie is not convinced by Maarif's argument for holding off secularization, and he also criticizes other advocates of the RDS model for being half-hearted in terms of recognizing the plurality of Indonesian society.<sup>77</sup> For that reason he also makes a distinction between government-driven 'secularization from without' and 'secularization from within' initiated by the Muslim bloc itself.<sup>78</sup> Whereas religious diversity is acknowledged to some

extent, non-religion or atheism are not receiving any formal recognition as acceptable convictions that can be held by Indonesian citizens. Such inconsistencies provide—even if unwittingly—ammunition to those who oppose secularism, pluralism and liberalism altogether. Therefore, Assyaukanie relies more on the ideas of other first-generation postcolonial intellectuals, such as the unaffiliated Nurcholish Madjid, but also on NU leader Abdurrahman Wahid, who defended political secularization on the grounds that it represents the best option for a rational administration of a state, without interfering with religion as social ethics.<sup>79</sup>

JIL co-founder Ulil Abshar-Abdalla also thinks that MUI is mistaken in defining secularism as cutting out religion from worldly affairs; the only separation taking place is between the authority of religious officialdom and state power. Secularism does not prevent religion from exercising a role in the public domain; it only desires that the state remains theologically neutral in line with the Qur'anic dictum that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (*la ikraha fi al-din*).<sup>80</sup> He even extends the meaning of secularization and desacralization beyond the political realm and applies it also to thinking *about* religion in general, which must be clearly distinguished from religion itself: While the latter has absolute pretensions, the former is always relative.<sup>81</sup> Abshar-Abdalla points explicitly to the correspondence between Nurcholish Madjid's interpretations and the more recent work of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who subjected religious discourses to text-critical and semiotic analyses which are now exercising tremendous influence on contemporary Islamic thinking.<sup>82</sup>

### *Liberal Islam as social ethics and democratic force*

This does not mean that the resulting new epistemic community necessarily adheres to a single epistemological paradigm. Even among the younger progressive-minded Muslim intellectuals, there are still considerable differences of opinion regarding secularization and its suitability for Muslim societies.<sup>83</sup> In the previous chapter we saw how the conflation of Nurcholish Madjid's ideas with those of Abdurrahman Wahid is challenged by Ahmad Baso's comparative study of the duo in *NU Studies*, where he explores the differences between the latter's 'indigenization of Islam' and the former's Islamization agenda as representations of so-called 'liberal Islam'. For that purpose Baso returned

to the same point he made in 2001, in an article for *Tashwirul Afkar*, where he already problematized the designation ‘liberal’ by pointing to the obscurities left unresolved in Charles Kurzman’s *Liberal Islam* and Greg Barton’s haphazard lumping together of Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid into the category of neo-modernism and its unsubstantiated equation with liberal Islam.<sup>84</sup>

Baso’s juxtaposition of the two most influential individuals in terms of defining the discursive formations under investigation is also instructive for teasing out the differences between second- and third-generation postcolonial Muslim intellectuals in interpreting these two seminal figures in relation to the envisaged role of religion in public life. Baso’s proposition of engaging in ‘a new reading of “liberal Islam” from an ideological perspective’ along the lines of Louis Althusser’s suggestion that ideologies are expressions of ‘a will, a hope, or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality’ can also provide insights into the extent to which Karl Mannheim’s utopia has played a role in shaping Assyaaukanie’s interrogation of Muslim understandings of democracy and how it has influenced his selection of sources.<sup>85</sup> Quoting the Belgian philosopher Jean Ladrière (1921–2007), Ahmad Baso says that this epistemological ‘passage to theory’ makes liberal Islam an ideological—not a scholarly—discourse in which the interactions of rationality, interests and power relations are expressed through a set of collective religious symbols in order to promote or legitimize one group’s views and convictions vis-à-vis those of another.<sup>86</sup> In line with the discourse critique discussed in the previous chapter, Baso qualifies liberal Islam as represented by Nurcholish Madjid’s Islamization agenda as an ideology which rationalizes the use of religious symbols in order to make common cause with the government, whereas Abdurrahman Wahid’s proposed indigenization (*pribumisasi*) of Islam transforms the same symbols into internalized Islamic values that can empower society to hold the state accountable.<sup>87</sup> While the first ideology is driven by a Nietzschean ‘will to power’, the other is motivated by ‘the hope’ for a social transformation.<sup>88</sup>

Reading secularization as a liberating movement through this ideological lens, the implication of Nurcholish Madjid’s statement that ‘traditional lines of thought must go overboard’ actually means that liberalization, desacralization and secularization are synonymous with superseding of all traditional values.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, the force of Nurcholish Madjid’s ‘liberalism’ was not just directed against Islamic



parties, such as Masyumi, but also the Muslim mass organizations, whether they represent modernist conservatism and rigidity (read Muhammadiyah) or contra-reformist traditionalism (NU).<sup>90</sup> The ‘true’ or ‘pure’ Islam which Nurcholish Madjid envisaged as replacing these obsolete Islamic discourses was shaped by the neo-modernism as developed by Fazlur Rahman under the inspiration of the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya. According to Baso, even the slogan ‘Islam Yes! Islamic Party No!’—launched before Madjid even went to study in Chicago—was already informed by Ibn Taymiyya’s contention of what constitutes pure and authentic Islam.

The impact of Salafi thinking in general on Nurcholish Madjid’s view of Islamizing Indonesian society without turning it into an Islamic state is also evident in his language through the use of words like illegitimate, anomalous, heretical and deviationist, when discussing the contributions of individual thinkers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina; schools of thought like the Mu‘tazila and Ash‘arites; or Batini, Isma‘ili and other Islamic minority sects. His later writings continue to reflect Ibn Taymiyya’s influence, with frequent references to the time of the Prophet and the era of Righteous Caliphs, and the use of an Arabized Indonesian jargon when discussing democracy (*musyawara*), law (*hukum*), just society (*masyarakat adil*) or civil society (*masyarakat madani*). It even colors his interpretation of the Pancasila as a doctrine reflecting Islamic values.<sup>91</sup> On these grounds, Baso reasons that the kind of differentiation and marginalization resulting from Madjid’s promotion of a particular Islamic discourse in support of Indonesia’s state doctrine and system of governance turned his liberal Islam into a hegemonic discourse and a dominant political force rather than a liberating idea. It makes it not just very difficult to distinguish Nurcholish Madjid’s position from what Assyaukanie has called ‘secularization from within’; his use of Islamic jargon actually obscures the extent to which it can be considered a form of secularization in the first place.

Baso agrees with Assyaukanie that Abdurrahman Wahid regards religion as a social ethics, not an ideology for the re-Islamization of the country. The former NU leader and late president actually supports the plea by the Egyptian scholar Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888–1966) for a separation of religion and state as explained in the latter’s controversial publication from 1925, *Islam and the Principles of Governance (Islam wa Usul al-Hukm)*. However, Assyaukanie’s identification of Wahid and Madjid as representatives of a similar kind of liberal Islam—also

called Islamic neo-modernism—seems to follow Greg Barton's interpretation and again obscures the significant differences between these two men. Baso suggests that liberal Islam represented by Abdurrahman Wahid's understanding of secularization as part of his *pribumisasi* or indigenization agenda is meant to ensure a differentiation of authority between religion and state along Casanova's lines.<sup>92</sup> Instead of representing a dominant discourse like Nurcholish Madjid's Islamization, the ideological purport of Wahid's indigenization of Islam can be read as an oppositional transformative program which has no need for an explicit reference to Islam.<sup>93</sup> What he means by that is that Islamic values have been integrated into the local culture in such a way that their manifestations no longer need to be referred to as Islamic. In fact they may even no longer be recognizable as Islamic in origin. This is also the reason why Abdurrahman Wahid is opposed to the Arabization of Muslim culture in Indonesia. The underlying worldview, grounded in a simultaneous belief in the universal validity of Islamic values and the Muslim world's cultural cosmopolitanism, has shaped Abdurrahman Wahid's concern for improving the human condition in Indonesia through democratization, and the upholding of universal standards of justice, pluralism and human rights, instead of playing up the country's Islamic credentials.

The reinterpretation of Islam as a social ethics is hampered by the fact that—in comparison to law, theology, politics and philosophy—as an intellectual field, ethics is not very well developed within the Islamic tradition. Although there exists a classical literature on Sufi practices, morals and *savoir vivre*, these writings—while drawing on religious ethical sources—are still very much power-oriented, as has been shown by the research of Mohammed Arkoun into the subject.<sup>94</sup> The literature on political jurisprudence and Sufism has actually strengthened a social system that is hierarchical in character and structure, shaped by a notion of supreme, divine power. According to Ahmad Baso, this also explains why both the Sunni and Shi'i political literatures have adopted the ideology of 'the union of religion and state'.<sup>95</sup> Instead of the earlier noted understanding of the caliphate as a metaphor for human stewardship on earth that is making a comeback among progressive Muslim intellectuals, from the time of the Abbasids onwards the mainstream classical Islamic literature has presented the caliphs as claimants of being 'God's shadow on earth'.<sup>96</sup>

To offset this politicized interpretation of Islam with a civil society-driven perspective advocating solidarity, justice and democracy, it is

necessary to understand that the Islamic call for Muslims to ‘cooperate for righteousness and piety’ addresses the Islamic *umma* not as an exclusive community with its own specific set of duties, but that it is an appeal to transform into the proponents of a ‘doctrine of social solidarity and citizenship without distinction of ethnicity, religion or other affiliation’.<sup>97</sup> The development of such a social ethics requires a return to the legal concept of ‘the common good’ or *maslaha*. Baso stresses that, true to the NU’s reinterpretation of *Aswaja* as a force capable of reinventing itself in accordance to changing circumstances, Abdurrahman Wahid also advocated a return to the so-called *al-kulliyat al-khamsa*, or five principles, of the Shafi’i School of Law. Drawing on a sub-field of Islamic law dealing with the so-called ‘higher objectives’ of *shari’a* (*maqasid al-shari’a*), which will be discussed in much greater detail in the next chapter, these consist of safeguarding religion, human life, intellect, lineage and property.<sup>98</sup> Baso hastens to add that this must not be seen as a nostalgic longing for some Golden Age, as he says is the case with Madjid’s return to time of the Righteous Caliphs. Instead, it reflects a desire to fulfil an ideology of hope that will find its realization in the future. To emphasize this difference between Nurcholish Madjid’s backward-looking (reactionary) and Abdurrahman Wahid’s forward-looking (progressive) ideological positions, Baso brings in a parallel borrowed from Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, who contrasted the ideologized philosophies of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd as oriented towards the past and future respectively. For this reason, Baso claims that:

The ideas of Abdurrahman Wahid have points in common with the thought of the Moroccan thinker Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri regarding ‘the separation of religion and politics’, the originally Algerian thinker Mohammed Arkoun in regards to ‘secularism’, and also the Egyptian thinker Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd’s ‘critique of religious discourse’.<sup>99</sup>

In terms of secularization as part of an oppositional discourse that holds the government accountable or even calls state structures into question, Assyaukanie’s use of the NU’s New *Ulama* to support his argumentation makes more sense than his earlier mentioned conflation of first-generation postcolonial intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid. The NU’s current general chairman Said Aqil Siraj defends the compatibility of Islam with secularization by invoking a *hadith* in which the Prophet said that his Companions were more knowledgeable about worldly matters (*antum a’lamu bi umuri*

*dunyakum*). He also refers to the Covenant of Medina as historical evidence that the type of Islamic state proposed by Islamists cannot be traced back to that Prophetic model.<sup>100</sup> Even more pertinent is Assyaukanie's reference to Masdar Mas'udi, who reasons that there are three types of Islamic doctrine: private, communal and public. In regard to the first and second types, the state is prohibited from interference; as for the third, even though the state has the right to interfere, there is no need to exercise that prerogative. In fact, Mas'udi uses the third doctrine to criticize Indonesia's existing polity which, although not Islamic in its pretensions, is identified as a religious state by force of the Pancasila Doctrine. To his mind, there is not even a need for a Ministry of Religious Affairs, which currently determines which religions are recognized and which religious rituals and practices are considered as conforming to approved doctrines and traditions.<sup>101</sup> As examples, Assyaukanie cites the way that marriage is regulated in Indonesia, the discrimination against Islamic offshoots such as the Ahmadiyyah, and the lack of recognition of adherents of minority religions, such as Confucianists, and indigenous spiritual practices such as *Kebatinan*.

Assyaukanie's advocacy of a variant of liberal Islam may be considered as an oppositional discourse, because it argues that secularization can only be achieved under the LDS model. His reliance on NU intellectuals to undergird this argument is another instance of blurring the lines between Muslim modernists and traditionalists, as well as a further illustration of the ambiguities affecting terms such as secularism and liberal Islam. These terminological obscurities, whether implied, imposed or genuine, have contributed significantly to the controversy surrounding the fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in July 2005.<sup>102</sup> In an immediate response, Abdurrahman Wahid took the lead in forming the 'Civil Society Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief' (*Aliansi Masyarakat Madani untuk Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan*).<sup>103</sup> He was joined by other progressive Muslim intellectuals, including Dawam Rahardjo, Djohan Effendi, Syafi'i Anwar and Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, as well as Yan Husein Lamardi as representative of the Ahmadiyyah community, the Protestant minister Weinata Sairin, and the spiritual activist Anand Krishna.<sup>104</sup> The resulting polarization which characterizes the acrimonious debates that erupted in the wake of these statements continues to divide the Muslim community and trouble other segments of the Indonesian population.

One of the concerns of MUI regarding secularism is that it perceives it as anti-religious, a concept that wants to excise religion from the

world. The dichotomy between this-worldly and other-worldly existence posited in the fatwa stigmatizes secularism, liberalism and pluralism, causing a serious setback for the discussions on these three concepts which had been very productive in Indonesia, despite all the differences of opinion. The fatwa's conservative tone is informed by a hegemonic discursive undercurrent which sees Islam as sacred and considers secularism as a 'banned substance' (*barang haram*) endangering the purity of Islam.<sup>105</sup> With a nod to the German-Syrian political scientist Bassam Tibi, Budhy Munawar-Rachman diagnoses such a view as afflicted by the same defensive posture against the perceived onslaught of modernization and Westernization that still affects many Muslims. The reductionist and dichotomous interpretation coloring the fatwa has turned the discussion in Indonesia into an emotional debate, carrying with it the real danger of imprinting religion and Indonesian religious thought with an authoritarian stamp, says Munawar-Rachman:

The fatwa prohibiting secularism, liberalism and pluralism created quite a stir amidst the intensive campaign efforts by a number of leading religious figures for development, liberation, and nationalism—without using the expressions in question—as one solution for a tolerant religious way of life in Indonesia, in the wake of reformasi and communal conflicts.<sup>106</sup>

Progressive intellectuals who have deliberated about the concept of secularism at great length point out that it is not opposed to religion, countering that it can in fact provide an 'effective solution to religious disagreements or conflicts'.<sup>107</sup> Writing just before the release of the fatwa, Luthfi Assyaukanie has even characterized secularism as 'a benediction for religions'.<sup>108</sup> On a later occasion, he emphatically stated that the introduction of democracy must unavoidably lead to the simultaneous acceptance of 'secular state principles'.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Mazhab Ciputat intellectual and UIN Professor Kautsar Azhar Noer insisted that the freedom of religion is best guaranteed in secular states, a position that is also publicly shared elsewhere in the Muslim world, for example by the Sudanese legal scholar and theorist of human rights Abdullahi an-Na'im.<sup>110</sup>

Budhy Munawar-Rachman notes the irony that a fatwa issued by MUI, a body affiliated with the government and expected to act in accordance with Indonesia's constitution and the safeguards it provides regarding the freedom of religion and conscience, has in effect monopolized religious interpretation. As this touches on the founda-

tions of the country's constitutional democracy, both Budhy Munawar-Rachman and Djohan Effendi warn that prohibiting secularism by implication means nothing less than undermining the foundations of the democratization process and that it thus jeopardizes the achievements of the *Reformasi* era to the dangers of absolutism.<sup>111</sup>

The criticisms by other second- and third-generation intellectuals from the Ciputat School, such as Komaruddin Hidayat and Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, push the issue even further. They claim that the secularism–democracy nexus has evolved so far and gained such widespread acceptance that any polemics about the pros and cons of secularism have actually become superfluous and obsolete. Thinking along similar lines, ICIP director Syafi'i Anwar sees secularism as a positive force needed to stem the potential rise of religious absolutism: Only a moderate and progressive understanding of secularism will ensure the independence of religions from incursions by the state or undue undemocratic political pressures.<sup>112</sup> This is why both the senior modernist intellectual M. Amin Abdullah, and a writer from the postra community like Zuhairi Misrawi, have both proposed that MUI should draft an alternative fatwa. According to Abdullah, legal opinions about the relationship between state and religion issued by religious institutions such as MUI should carefully balance 'the characteristics of these two domains, which are different but interwoven'.<sup>113</sup> It should thoroughly research the subject matter and consider the consequences and implications of releasing a fatwa, because religion is not just a matter of doctrine and dogma; it also has a strong emotional resonance with both individual citizens and communities.

Although it is not easy to formulate a single satisfactory interpretation of secularization acceptable to all progressive Muslim intellectuals, in Budhy Munawar-Rachman's estimation:

The differences of opinion among progressive Muslim intellectuals about the details—not the principle—of secularization and secularism form a discourse in itself. Its academic character will only enrich the perception [of these concepts]; making an important intellectual contribution especially to how the relationship between religion and state has to undergo an increasingly complex process of development as the Indonesian nation continues its journey.<sup>114</sup>

Third-generation proponents of explicitly liberal political agendas, such as Abshar-Abdalla and Assyaukanie, as well as more senior progressive-minded intellectuals, like Effendi and Rahardjo, agree that all

three contested concepts are necessary for a functioning democracy, but that secularism is the most important one for creating a civil society in which democratic principles can thrive. The MUI fatwa of 2005 is endangering that dialectic process between secularism, pluralism and liberalism.<sup>115</sup> Even those with reservations towards certain aspects of secularism, such as Amien Rais, do not agree with MUI's condemnation of the other two concepts.<sup>116</sup>

*Reactionary responses to secularity and liberal Islam*

Blanket rejections of all three principles in line with the pronouncements of the fatwa itself come from other parts of Indonesia's Muslim community, in particular those quarters with reactionary political agendas. These include detractors of progressive Islamic discourses in general, such as DDII, KISDI, FPI, MMI and HTI. In Budhy Munawar-Rachman's argumentation in favor of secularism, he has given ample space to discussing the attacks by FPI leader Habib Rizieq (Muhammad Rizieq bin Hussein Shihab, b.1965). Certainly, he and his organization are very vocal in raising objections against what are—in their eyes—deviant opinions and practices. Frequently, their actions derail into physical violence against their ideological opposites.<sup>117</sup> Refutations issuing from the HTI are intellectually more articulate, although their projected alternative must be considered as utopian, both in the sense of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and according to Masdar Hilmi's definition of Islamist alternatives to democracy.<sup>118</sup>

Instead of discussing secularism, liberalism and pluralism separately, writings on the condemned concepts by HTI activists take them as an aggregate. More often than not, these blanket criticisms are presented under titles referring in one way or another to liberalism only, employing terms like liberal Islam, liberal thinking or liberal bloc.<sup>119</sup> In one text published four years before the release of the MUI fatwa, but at the same time specifically dealing with secularism, the editor of an HTI publication presented the concept as part of a *ghazwu al-fikri*—an intellectual invasion of the Muslim world by ideas that are supposedly alien to Islamic worldviews. The explicit mention of *ghazwul fikr* in the official text of the fatwa conveniently provides HTI in hindsight with a vindication of that position.<sup>120</sup> A further analysis of other HTI writings reveals that this qualification of intellectual invasion is applied to both capitalist and Marxist discourses.<sup>121</sup> However, *ghazwul fikr* is

a problematic term in itself; reactionary Muslims object to Western ideas of all sorts, without including the puritan cultural-religious influences coming from the Middle East in this category. Meanwhile, their progressive opponents also qualify this type of Arabization as alien to Indonesian culture, but make an exception of taking over ideas from innovative Arab heritage thinkers.

When it comes to discussing and challenging secularism, liberalism and pluralism, and associated sub-themes such as democracy, gender equality, human rights, freedom of thought and interfaith dialogue, HTI writers mainly stress the capitalist roots of these ideas.<sup>122</sup> This provides spokespersons such as Ismail Yusanto, Farid Wajdi and Shiddiq al-Jawi with an opportunity to link secularism, liberalism and pluralism politically to Western imperialist intentions and neocolonial agendas—now primarily driven by the United States.<sup>123</sup> Ignoring the equally strong secular foundations of Marxist thinking, HTI partisans cast themselves in the role of anti-imperialist and anti-hegemonic organic intellectuals. On one occasion, Yusanto illustrated the USA's clash with Islam as part of its pursuit of 'gold, glory and gospel'—a slogan he used to refer to the American ambition to dominate the world not only economically and politically, but also through the spread of Christianity.<sup>124</sup> An additional benefit from the HTI point of view is the chance to present Indonesia's liberal Muslims as agents of the West. When an article by Ulil Abshar Abshar-Abdalla in *Kompas* resulted in an unofficial death sentence by Bandung-based vigilantes, HTI's *Buletin al-Islam* continued the attack with a critique of Ulil Abshar-Abdalla's five-point agenda for a non-literal, substantive and contextual interpretation of Islam as part of 'imperialism's global agenda': A secret propaganda mission to undermine Islam. To the HTI this was sufficient 'proof that secularism is the platform of the liberal Islam circle'.<sup>125</sup> In an approving commentary on MUI's rejection of secularism, liberalism and pluralism, Wajdi notes with evident satisfaction that—in contravention of its own insistence on rational and scholarly exchanges—the secular-liberal bloc responded 'emotionally' and in a 'panic'—dismissing not just the fatwa but also the MUI's scholars as 'stupid' and 'foolish'.<sup>126</sup> This criticism is not entirely disingenuous, because by using such qualifications, some progressive Muslims were indeed resorting to the same rhetoric they held against their reactionary interlocutors.

HTI's reactions to secularization are not confined to criticism alone. Both Farid Wajdi and Ismail Yusanto have developed agendas for the



implementation of an Islamic alternative to the polity where state and religion are separated or differentiated, and thus clearing a space for the equally objectionable derivatives of secularism: Liberalism and pluralism. Although these proposals differ in their respective elaborations, both alternatives project a totalizing worldview in which Islamic principles shape all aspects of human life.<sup>127</sup> For Wadji it consists in bolstering the intellectual acumen of Muslims in order to equip them with the necessary tools for demonstrating the fallacies of Western ideas in both its capitalist and socialist manifestations. Finally, these two stages are then complemented by a type of *dakwah* that is exercised on the political level in order to implement 'Islamic shari'a in all aspects of life'.<sup>128</sup> Yusanto proposes a complete systemic overhaul of the structure, infrastructure and superstructure of the existing order governing current Muslim existence by replacing it with an 'Islamic personality' (*syakhshīyah Islāmiyyah*), 'Islamic culture' (*tsaqāfah Islāmiyyah*) and 'Islamic Caliphate' (*khilāfah Islāmiyyah*) which will reshape human life on the individual, social and political levels respectively.<sup>129</sup>

Although the HTI has demonstrated its support for the MUI fatwa against secularism, pluralism and liberalism, internal discourses on Islamic statehood and a prospective new polity show how the organization actually sidesteps the issues at hand in the debates around secularism and the Pancasila Doctrine. Instead, its reactionary advocacy of a restoration of the historical caliphate can be put in a more immediate opposition to the metaphorical understanding of the caliphate as human stewardship in this-worldly existence, as proposed by some of the progressive-minded intellectuals. In this stand-off, both camps perceive their own positions as truly innovative interpretations of what is respectively regarded as the desired political institution or a concept to be aspired to by Muslims for a shared global future.

From the above analyses of the various views on secularization and secularism formulated by Indonesia's second- and third-generation postcolonial Muslim intellectuals, it becomes clear that they were developed very much in dialogue with the ideas articulated by their interlocutors from the previous generation. Similarly, it is difficult to divorce these continuing discussions of secularity from long-standing debates about the Pancasila Doctrine.

*The Pancasila in democratic Indonesia*

The phenomenon of pillarization (*aliranisasi*), which has been a determining feature of Indonesian public life since late colonial times, is a key reason why secularization and Pancasila are so entwined. This poses a challenge to distinguish clearly the generic issue of the sacred and profane from the more specific ideological questions of the place of religion in the Indonesian state structure. Upon gaining independence in 1945, Indonesia has accommodated this pillarization in the structures governing postcolonial politics through the introduction of the Pancasila Doctrine. Writing in 1966, at the critical juncture when Indonesia transitioned from Old to New Order, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908–94), one of the country's leading intellectuals of the last century, pointed out that Pancasila's first principle of belief in the One and Only God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*) was intended to satisfy Islamist politicians, while stressing that the territorial unity and integrity of the state catered to the concerns of secular nationalists.<sup>130</sup> The inclusion of social justice as a further principle was intended to draw in the socialists and communists. Finally, the remaining principles of just and civilized humanitarianism and advocacy of democratization were overall rallying points to establish a sense of solidarity transcending the existing pillars.<sup>131</sup> As a political ideology it continues to define the country's political, religious and cultural landscape until the present day.

When the New Order became more entrenched in the late 1960s, the regime wanted to give a clear signal to the former Masyumi establishment, and the Muslim segment of the population in general, that it remained committed to Pancasila and would not tolerate a new politicization of Islam. This quashed any illusions of a possible change to the status of the Jakarta Charter, turning it into an integral part of the constitution rather than what Sukarno had called 'a historical document' when the 1945 constitution was reinstated at the introduction of Guided Democracy in 1959.<sup>132</sup> On the contrary, eventually Suharto's government formalized even more stringently the position of Pancasila as the only acceptable ideological ground of the Indonesian republic, demanding that all political and social-religious actors expressed their explicit acceptance of the doctrine.

In the run-up to this, Bahtiar Effendy records a number of 'theological offences' which the Muslim community had to suffer. These included the attempt in 1973 to introduce a new marriage law recognizing civil

marriages, and a proposal presented in 1978 to acknowledge Javanese mysticism (*kepercayaan; kebatinan*) as an official religion.<sup>133</sup> While in both these cases the government eventually compromised by withdrawing the marriage law proposal and relegating Javanese mysticism to an element of Indonesian culture under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture rather than administering it through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, ‘the final blow to the old construct of political Islam, especially in terms of its ideological symbolism, came in 1983’ when the government formally imposed ‘Pancasila as the sole basis (*asas tunggal*) of all existing political organizations’.<sup>134</sup> With the government’s mass organization Golkar obviously in full support, the only other two recognized political parties at the time, the loyalist Muslim PPP and the nationalist PDI, had no option but to follow suit. Subsequently, pressure increased on the socio-religious organizations, until by 1985 also the NU, Muhammadiyah, MUI and the Muslim student unions had been forced to submit to the Pancasila Doctrine.

Although the imposition of Pancasila came about in a climate of political repression, and its monopoly was eventually revoked by parliament in 1998, it remains the mainstay of the political outlook shared by most progressive Muslim intellectuals in the *Reformasi* era.<sup>135</sup> According to Effendy, the explanation for this acquiescence lies in an ‘earnest belief in the notion of Islamic holism’ that underlies their substantivist interpretations of Islam by progressive Muslims. This means that while acknowledging that there is no ontological separation between the divine and profane aspects of human existence, this does not mean that the two domains need to be mixed. On the contrary, as discussed in the section above on secularization, ‘they can—and in fact must be differentiated’ on a functional level.<sup>136</sup> Whether they are articulated as desacralization, reactualization or indigenization, all these instances are shaped by the same doctrinal proposition that only Allah possesses absolute transcendence, and that there is nothing sacred or absolute about socio-political affairs; neither state, parties nor ideologies—whether they are inspired by religion or not—can claim the same exalted status. At the same time, because of Islam’s holistic nature, political institutions must reflect the basic injunctions laid out in the Qur’an regarding a just society. However, because of the scripture’s timeless universal validity, it expresses these values in very general principles which can be implemented at the discretion of Islam’s adherents in accordance with the circumstances of the time. In the absence of any clear indications that

Islamic teachings take a specific interest in the affairs of state, or any evidence that there has ever been an explicit historical declaration in favor of a particular Islamic state model, those Muslims who privilege substantive understandings of Islamic doctrine over formalism feel vindicated in holding on to their position.<sup>137</sup>

An intriguing feature in the discussions on Pancasila during the post-Suharto *Reformasi* era is how opponents of the MUI fatwa have used the doctrine 'as a shield to defend Indonesia and Indonesian values', in much the same way as those who want to block the introduction of the Jakarta Charter into the country's constitutional structure.<sup>138</sup> This coralling of Pancasila by Muslim activists is somewhat ironic, because the affirmation of Pancasila as the sole ideological foundation of the Indonesian state by the New Order in the mid-1980s was initially met with great scepticism on the part of Indonesia's Muslim community and only reluctantly accepted by some of the key representatives of progressive Muslim intellectualism. Just as in the secularization debate, at present, Muslim positions vis-à-vis Pancasila are also the outcome of a conversation between successive generations of intellectuals.

In line with his earlier distinction between secularization from without and from within, Assyaukanie argues that the acceptance of Pancasila is not simply the outcome of 'the forced acceptance of the political repression of the New Order regime. To some extent, such an acceptance was [also] a result of deep consideration of the fundamental doctrines of Islam' in relation to principles like justice, equality and freedom.<sup>139</sup> Although Assyaukanie pays less attention to the hostile climate in which Pancasila was enforced, he is very critical of the implications of the desire for turning Indonesia into a religious state. This more benign view of what transpired when Pancasila was imposed in the 1980s also informs his theorizing of the three models of democracy advocated by different segments of the Muslim community, in which the justification of Pancasila forms a foundational argument for Muslim proponents of the Religious State Model (RDS), who fail, however, to follow through on its full consequences in terms of secularization.

Even those Muslims who did agree to adopt Pancasila 'responded differently to the idea of *asas tunggal*', with the NU accepting it more readily than the Muhammadiyah.<sup>140</sup> Both Achmad Siddiq and Abdurrahman Wahid saw Pancasila as occupying a similar intermediate position between Islamism and secularism as the religious modera-

tism (*tawassut*) associated with the NU's interpretation of *Aswaja*, in which Islam provides a middle way between polytheism and atheism through its doctrine of the absolute oneness and unity of God (*tawhid*).<sup>141</sup> Back in the 1980s, this made Pancasila not just acceptable to Siddiq, but even desirable in view of the plurality of Indonesian society. It represented a kind of tolerance that could be vindicated in terms of Islamic teachings, because it conformed to the Qur'anic injunction in verse 34 of *Sura al-Imran* to uphold equitable propositions.<sup>142</sup> However, Islamic post-traditionalists such as Rumadi have qualified this view as too minimalist. Notwithstanding the fact that classical liberalism is also grounded in a minimal ethics, from their point of view Achmad Siddiq can therefore not be called a liberal man.<sup>143</sup>

Among the generally hesitant Muhammadiyah intellectuals of the 1980s, Assyaukanie identifies Syafii Maarif and Kuntowijoyo as individuals who distinguished themselves from their peers by their more positive attitudes towards Pancasila. While Maarif even explicitly deferred to NU leader Achmad Siddiq's reasoning in favor of Pancasila, Kuntowijoyo built his own argumentation on the earlier mentioned notion of the objectification of Islam.<sup>144</sup> In the same context, he also urged both the NU and Muhammadiyah to resist the temptation of returning to party politics. 'High politics', which transcends partisanship by privileging substance over form, would be better served by sticking to a return to the *Khittah* 1926.<sup>145</sup>

Young Muhammadiyah activists, such as Ahmad Najib Burhani, take a more self-reflective stance: challenging the reluctance and even hostility displayed by the organization's conservative leadership. He also criticizes the almost exclusive focus on political motivations, deploring that 'it is difficult to find an analysis from a religious perspective'.<sup>146</sup> This obscures the fact that Abdurrahman Wahid's accommodation of Pancasila as part of his *pribumisasi* or indigenization agenda is not merely motivated by short-term political goals, but fits within his view of Islamic cosmopolitanism, while it is also consistent with the way in which the NU's basic thinking is shaped by *fiqh*. As has been discussed earlier, within the organization's reinterpretation of *Aswaja*'s triadic constellation, a holistic and non-formalistic understanding of *fiqh* as a flexible method of thinking (*manhaj fikri*) has been defining for the NU's intellectual outlook from the 1980s onwards. Consequently, 'the formal aspects of government do not constitute a problem for the NU so long as they conform to the formal

behavior patterns of state which are not in conflict with *fiqh* law'.<sup>147</sup> Burhani further points out that cosmopolitanism and *fiqh* complement each other as the positive and negative justifications for the acceptance of Pancasila as the sole political foundation of the Indonesian state. Culturally inclusivist cosmopolitanism can absorb Pancasila as *asas tunggal*, while *fiqh* can accommodate it on the grounds of a legal dictum which states that 'in principle, all non-religious activities [except rituals] are permitted except for when there is religious proof to the contrary'.<sup>148</sup> It is somewhat ironic to see that a young Muhammadiyah activist jumps to the defense of a former NU leader in the face of accusations of political opportunism, by demonstrating that if his critics had been cognizant of the religious argument, it should have occurred to them that Abdurrahman Wahid was acting consistently with the NU's apolitical stance and 'total *fiqh* approach'.<sup>149</sup> Burhani's explanation dovetails with Ahmad Baso's contention that Abdurrahman Wahid's position on Pancasila should be understood as a proper implementation of the decision to return to the *Khittah* 1926, through which the NU had reinvented itself as a societal organization operating in the field of religion, whereas membership of political parties remains a personal matter.<sup>150</sup>

Other scholars and intellectuals have also tried to provide dynamic readings of the role of Pancasila through a recalibration of the ways in which religion can continue to function in Indonesian public life. Aside from the Islamic post-traditionalist Ahmad Baso, these also include individuals such as Paramadina's Yudi Latif and Moch Nur Ichwan of UIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta. Instead of examining academic writings and opinion pieces by intellectuals, Latif and Ichwan's analyses deal with the official debates on the status of Pancasila, and in particular the place of the first principle in the public domain. Ichwan also shares Baso's interest in using Casanova to explain how Abdurrahman Wahid's indigenization project and interpretation of Islam as social ethics can be made compatible with a dynamic view of the Pancasila Doctrine. According to Baso, this is possible because Abdurrahman Wahid does not regard Islam as an ideology, nor a political strategy, nor even an alternative way of life. In almost all of his writings about Pancasila, he emphasizes the distinction between Islam as a religion and Pancasila as a national ideology. Earlier in the chapter it was already discussed how this social ethics is embodied by civilizational or transformative Islam, which make no exclusivist claims concerning religious doctrines. Thus,

it is able to effect a structural transformation of social life that ‘does not take on an Islamic color, but invests its energy into the zeal of the nation as a whole’, thus acting in accordance with the Pancasila formulation of a mandatory belief in one God.<sup>151</sup> This interpretation echoes José Casanova’s thesis on public religion, which can also be understood as a social ethics that differs from personal morality or ethical family values, and which is not political either.

Although Casanova’s theorizing is based on empirical data derived from studying secularization processes in Brazil, Poland, Spain and the United States, Baso considers its findings also applicable to Muslim settings. He accepts that the differentiation between religious and secular norms and institutions is indeed a ‘structural disposition of the modern world’ in general.<sup>152</sup> However, based on the evidence Casanova has collected, the latter’s two sub-theses on the decline and privatization of religion are no longer relevant, because religion is again very visible and audible in the public sphere. For Baso this is so crucial for understanding the connection between Islam as a social ethics and the conditions under which Pancasila can be accepted that he quotes lengthy sections from Casanova in his book *NU Studies*.

Casanova identified three instances in which deprivatization of religion is justified: First, in defense of modern freedoms and rights, and the very right of existence of a democratic civil society; second, when contesting the absolute lawful autonomy of the secular; and third, to protect the ‘traditional life world from administrative or juridical penetration’.<sup>153</sup> While these instances uphold the differentiation between the secular and religious domains, they certainly do not imply ‘a synchronic link between secularization and the “decline of religion” thesis’.<sup>154</sup> However, what has changed with deprivatization is the locus from where religion makes its influence felt; this is ‘no longer the state, or political society, but rather civil society’.<sup>155</sup> In making his case for the relevance of Casanova’s findings for the role of Islam in Indonesia, Baso cites the transformation of the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council from a state-centered into a society-centered institution. Reminiscent of Assyaukanie’s ‘secularization from within’, he also mentions the Protestant capacity for accommodating a ‘form of religious internal secularization’.<sup>156</sup> In this reading, Casanova’s narrative of deprivatization and public religion articulates a similar story to the interpretation of Islam as a social ethics, which makes no exclusivist religious claims:

By positioning Islam as a 'transformative force' and as a 'cultural force', Abdurrahman Wahid wanted to focus the NU's struggle on 'the creation of a new social ethics which is suffused with the spirit of solidarity and a transformative zeal concerned with the fate of the small people'.<sup>157</sup>

Identifying solidarity, transformation and society as the three key words of this social ethics, Ahmad Baso's juxtaposition of Abdurrahman Wahid and José Casanova also serves to dispel the charges of accommodationism, or even opportunism, which were leveled against the NU under Abdurrahman Wahid by critics such as the Muhammadiyah-affiliated historian Kuntowijoyo, who is quoted as saying that the NU's acceptance of the Pancasila reflected 'a slave mentality' and 'weak-hearted politics'.<sup>158</sup> Baso also points out that Abdurrahman Wahid's advocacy of Islam as an ethos for all humankind beyond the confines of its manifestation as a particular religious tradition can be traced back to 1980 and 1982, so to a time before the New Order's forceful introduction of Pancasila as *asas tunggal*. The references to these key words solidarity, transformation and society are also meant to give credence to Wahid's presentation of Islam without reference to its symbols and formal religious teachings as having an implicit—but no less strong—resonance, not only with the first principle of Pancasila, but also with the doctrine's concern for social justice and humanitarianism.<sup>159</sup> These multiple linkages remain largely implied, because—to Baso's regret—Abdurrahman Wahid 'has never written an explicit elaboration of his views of either secularism or Islam as a social ethics'.<sup>160</sup>

Moch Nur Ichwan's analysis too is grounded in a premise taken from Abdurrahman Wahid, that Pancasila represents a 'mild secularism'. It too builds on Casanova's challenge of the classical three theses that secularism consists in the 'separation of state and religion, privatization of religion and differentiation between religious and non-religions spheres'.<sup>161</sup> Ichwan's foregone conclusion from official debates on Pancasila is that—regardless of the exact configuration of these three elements—some degree of religiousness remains present, offering a more fluid understanding of Pancasila in relation to religion and secularism than comes across from the analyses of intellectual discourses by Effendy and Assyaukanie.<sup>162</sup> The outcome of his research also affirms the precariousness of Indonesian political life sketched at the beginning of this book, which offers an explanation of the circumstances under which intellectuals formulate their ideas. This in turn is



helpful for understanding the nature of their responses and the positions they take up in their work.

Yudi Latif's *Perfect Country: Historicity, Rationality, and Actuality of the Pancasila* is probably the most comprehensive examination by a present-day Muslim intellectual of the genesis of Pancasila in the course of Indonesia's independence struggle and its evolution during the postcolonial period. Aside from a detailed historical account of the political debates about Pancasila, it also offers what the author has called a 'theoretical-comparative perspective' on the way each of Pancasila's five principles can be grounded (*membumikan*) in the overall doctrinal framework and remain relevant for the democratization efforts of the post-Suharto *Reformasi* era. Aside from using insights derived from José Casanova, Latif expands his examination by adding to the mix the work of the leading theorist of democracy, Alfred Stepan, but without unpacking his ideas in any detail. However, closer reading of Stepan's seminal writings on religion and democracy shows the attraction and relevance of his work for the contemporary Indonesian situation. Although he contrasts his comparative institutional approach to the analysis of the workings of democracies with the civilizational perspective of culturalists such as Samuel Huntington, Stepan again smuggles culture into his hypothesis, when he states 'that all great religious civilizations are multivocal' when it comes to democratic principles.<sup>163</sup> In order to deal with these ambiguities and ambivalences, he introduces the notion of 'Twin Tolerations', which he characterizes as a dynamic process of 'constant political construction and reconstruction'.<sup>164</sup> His detailed description of its workings reveals a similarity to the way Pancasila is envisaged as operating within the context of Indonesia's democratization process:

Democratic institutions must be free, within the bounds of the constitution and human rights, to generate policies. Religious institutions should not have constitutionally privileged prerogatives that allow them to mandate public policy to democratic governments. At the same time, individuals and religious communities, consistent with our institutional definition of democracy, must have complete freedom of worship privately. In addition, as individuals and groups, they must be able to advance their values publicly in civil society, and to sponsor organizations and movements in political society, as long as their actions do not impinge negatively on the liberties of other citizens or violate democracy and law.<sup>165</sup>

The mutual tolerance which results from this balancing act between the respective interests of a political system and religion(s) is the out-

come of what Stepan calls 'democratic bargaining'.<sup>166</sup> This, in turn, forms part of his refutation of a number of misinterpretations that have occurred and continue to mar the correct and accurate analysis of democratization processes in countries that are culturally different from each other. In the case of Indonesia, what Stepan calls doctrinal, methodological and normative misinterpretations are all relevant. The first one refers to the almost obvious fact that aside from cultural (including religious) differences, a diachronic study of the genesis of democracies will also reveal that no religious system in itself is 'univocally democratic or nondemocratic'.<sup>167</sup> The methodological and normative misinterpretations are found wanting on account of the 'fallacy of "unique founding conditions"' and the erroneous removal of religion from the political agenda altogether.<sup>168</sup> This is where Stepan says that Max Weber went wrong in terms of positing a reductionist thesis, as in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, while he is equally unconvinced by John Rawls' privileging of liberal arguing over the consensual agreements reached by actual polities. Speaking of the politics of Indonesia's unfolding democratization process, Stepan observed that 'in any attempt at democratic transition, leadership and organization are extremely important'.<sup>169</sup> Leaders of religious communities, or mass organizations such as the NU or Muhammadiyah, can only instil democratic values in their constituencies if they 'advance theologically convincing public arguments about the legitimate multivocality of their religion'.<sup>170</sup>

Apart from the evident relevance of culture which emerges from Stepan's comparative studies of democracies, aspects of his institutional analysis also apply to Indonesia's democratization process. His definition of democracy as 'a system of conflict regulation' means that it can only function provided a threshold of minimum institutional and political requirements has been established which will ensure the consolidation of the democratization process. Aside from free and fair elections, these include a constitution, a set of checks and balances to keep the government under control, and a 'robust and critical civil society'.<sup>171</sup> Whereas the latter also resonates with Casanova's public religion, together with Stepan's constitutionalism as the *sine qua non* for a functioning democracy it also affirms Abdurrahman Wahid's contention that 'Pancasila has been established as the constitutional foundation in the life of the nation and the state, while Islam constitutes the faith in the life of the Muslim population'.<sup>172</sup> This is why the

former NU leader saw no conflict between the two: Pancasila as an ideology does not want to replace Islam or behave as a new religion, whereas Islam has no ideological pretensions.

In his argument for the validity and relevance of Pancasila's first principle of a belief in one God, Latif too notes that there is no empirical evidence for a decline of religion in secularizing societies. Actually, it seems that rather the reverse is true, as there is an observable trend away from privatization to a return of religion in the public sphere; especially in cases when the diagnosis of political crises evinces a moral or spiritual void. In terms of the separation and differentiation theses, he sees that the relation between religion and state is being redefined on the basis of the realization that all religions are Janus-faced; each being capable of inclusivist–universalist reconciliation, but at the same time prone to exclusivist–particularist violence. Merging the insights obtained from Stepan and Casanova, Yudi Latif concludes that:

In order to overcome bad interferences by religions in the public sphere, the connection between religion and state must be approached in the context of a new relation, outside of the separation or fusion framework, which can ensure a framework for the realization of 'Twin Tolerations'. That new relational context is called 'differentiation'.<sup>173</sup>

The term differentiation is not only more accurate in terms of empirical evidence; in comparison with the earlier and prevalent alternative of separation it is less burdened by connotations of isolation and marginalization. Like Budhy Munawar-Rachman in his discussion of the secularization debate after the 2005 fatwa, Latif privileges the term to offset any insinuation that religion is being dispelled from the public sphere or sent into decline. Instead, differentiation reflects the functional difference between religious institutions and other areas of society, such as the state, economics and science. It implies a distinction between religious and political authority, each dealing with particular domains of human life, which are also conceptually different in terms of 'objectives, methods, ways of thinking, discourse, and procedure'.<sup>174</sup> Provided both sides tolerate each other—because that is what 'Twin Tolerations' means—religion and politics can each play their public roles without interference from the other; the former can even inspire the latter through the mediation of a well-functioning civil society.<sup>175</sup>

Yudi Latif's understanding of each of the individual five principles of Pancasila distinguishes ontological, epistemological and axiological foundations. Taken as a whole, he sees Pancasila not as a static ideol-

ogy, but as being responsive to the dynamics of time and circumstances. It remains open and receptive to continuous interpretation which gives new meaning to its contents.<sup>176</sup> In an interview with Budhy Munawar-Rachman, he explained that the first principle of the Pancasila is like a social contract: 'This means that religious values colour public life. The ethical values of the belief in One God must be translated into human and civilizational values which are cosmopolitan in nature (second principle), and then into the value of unity in diversity (third principle).'<sup>177</sup> This convergence of epistemological and teleological concerns, which transforms theology into an anthropology, clearly betrays the persisting influence of Latif and Munawar-Rachman's intellectual mentor Nurcholish Madjid whose view of secularization as a continuous process was shaped by a similar interpretation of Islamic values in Indonesia.

Placed in the historical context of the Indonesian republic, Moch Nur Ichwan too pays attention to the varying dynamics of Pancasila. Under normal circumstances, this state doctrine has been alternately interpreted as either a religious or secular ideology, as well as constituting at one and the same time a religious and a secular ideology. However, in times of crisis there is a tendency to see it as '*neither a secular nor a religious ideology*', which—according to Ichwan—is itself 'an ideological statement rather than a factual description'.<sup>178</sup> While both Sukarno and Suharto preferred treating Pancasila as a secular ideology, the latter was more acutely aware that he could not ignore Islam altogether. In its attempt to marginalize political and radical Islam, until 1990 the New Order regime only allowed what Ichwan describes as 'limited religionization', while the Islamization initiatives pursued between 1990 and 1998 evince an increasing but still 'moderate degree of religionization'.<sup>179</sup> In the new openness of the post-Suharto era, Indonesia witnessed a more substantial religionization as Islamic organizations and parties were now free to adopt Islam as their ideological basis, because with the abolition of Pancasila as the sole basis of legitimacy, retaining it as the foundation of the state became optional. Although explicit rejections were rare, new trends in political Islamic activism began to exhibit attitudes that posed challenges to the premises of the Pancasila Doctrine. Without presuming an immediate causality, Ichwan notes that with the rising influence of radical Muslim movements 'there has been a parallel between the religionization development in society and that in parliament and in government administration'.<sup>180</sup> With a nod to Martin van Bruinessen's 'con-

servative turn', he sees the resulting increase in religious law-making as discriminatory and a threat to the religious pluralism which Pancasila is supposed to safeguard. In this regard, he agrees with other intellectuals from his own generation 'that what is at stake is religious pluralism and tolerance'.<sup>181</sup>

*A Pancasila Front to shield Indonesia from 'creeping Talibanization'*

This notion of Pancasila as an ideology that is neither religious nor secular came once again to the fore due to the sense of crisis that was felt in the wake of Fatwa 7, as public concern grew over the course of the country's political process. For an extended period of time, countervailing views of the grassroots-level Islamization of Indonesian society had been drowned out by the sheer vocality of its advocates. With the semi-official imprimatur of MUI, this 'creeping Talibanization' was turned into a major political issue.<sup>182</sup> In the wake of the fatwa's release, the reactions of opponents and proponents took shape in the forging of alliances, the release of declarations and ripostes, and the calling of rallies and counter-rallies. The veteran French chronicler of political events in contemporary Indonesia, François Raillon, characterizes Indonesia's Muslim mainstream, which resists puritanical interpretations of Islam's role in society, as secularists; but a closer look at the account of the mobilization of this counter-force rallying behind the Pancasila banner offers a more diverse and multifarious picture.<sup>183</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, in an immediate response to the fatwa, critics from the progressive Muslim camp and representatives of other religious traditions involved in interfaith and ecumenical encounters had established a National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief (AKKBB), which condemned MUI for what was in effect a rejection of the principles of the country's ongoing democratization process. Barely a year later, an even broader coalition was formed which 'sought to restore Pancasila as the unifying national ideology'.<sup>184</sup> The groundwork for this initiative was laid in the months running up to Pancasila Memorial Day, on 1 June 2006. First talks were initiated by the journalist and 'self-proclaimed socialist intellectual' Rahman Tolleng (b.1938) in December 2005. A former member of Sutan Sjahrir's Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) and staunch critic of both Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, he was also behind the establishment of the Association for Education on Democracy (*Perhimpunan*

*Pendidikan Demokrasi*, P2D).<sup>185</sup> Now he was hosting a select but wide cross-section of Indonesia's intellectual scene, including the German-born (but naturalized Indonesian) Catholic theologian and philosopher Franz Magniz-Suseno (b.1936), veteran journalist Aristides Katoppo (b.1939), Abdurrahman Wahid's brother, Salahuddin (b.1942), the lawyer Todung Mulya Lubis (b.1949), and JIL activist Hamid Basyaib (b.1962).<sup>186</sup> In the ensuing months, more individuals and organizations joined the initiative, including the Brighten Institute—a think tank considered close to the president and based at SBY's alma mater, the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB). Finally, on the eve of Pancasila Day, a symposium on the campus of Universitas Indonesia in Depok brought together representatives of its Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Tolleng's P2D, the Brighten Institute, UGM and the Tempo Media Group, in order to author a final version of a so-called 'Declaration on Indonesianness' (*Maklumat Keindonesiaan*). It was read out the next day by Todung Mulya Lubis at a large rally, attended by the president and members of the cabinet.<sup>187</sup> The declaration contained an emphatic statement stressing that 'Indonesia does not consider Pancasila to be a religion', nor should it be seen as a 'single, perpetual doctrine'; if and when circumstances demanded, it could be replaced by a more suitable alternative.<sup>188</sup> In his description of the events on that day, Raillon observed that:

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) personally took a stronger stand. After the reading of the *Maklumat*, he delivered his own speech, conveying a simple message: Pancasila is not to be disputed or challenged, it is final. 'In fact, the debate is over. The founding fathers of the Republic have already found the right solution.'<sup>189</sup>

Various intellectuals featuring in this book are among the declaration's co-signatories, including Azyumardi Azra, Yudi Latif, Saiful Mujani, Budhy Munawar-Rachman and Dawam Rahardjo.<sup>190</sup> According to Azra, many Indonesian Muslims retained reservations against Pancasila, because it had been forcefully imposed by Suharto 'to indoctrinate the Indonesian people and to threaten them', while Rahardjo observed that under Pancasila, minority rights are not at the mercy of majority rule, as is the case with the 'rule of 50 per cent plus one' of many liberal democracies.<sup>191</sup>

However, Ma'ruf Amin, the NU scholar in charge of MUI's fatwa drafting commission, was unrepentant and maintained that 'Islamic values are better than human rights', further insisting that 'every reli-

gion has the right to interpret Pancasila according to its religious teachings'.<sup>192</sup> To back up that position, he pointed to the Indonesian Constitution itself, claiming that not a single article prevented the use of religion as a source of law, and that the much debated article 29 made Pancasila not secular, because it reiterates its first principle of the belief in one God.<sup>193</sup> Aside from conservatives such as Amin, also reactionary Muslims persisted in their rejection of the Pancasila as maintaining that the doctrine condones secularism and pluralism. A year after the proclamation of the Declaration of Indonesianness—and just five days prior to Independence Day on 12 August 2007—the HTI succeeded in organizing a large-scale international conference where participants called for a return of the caliphate.<sup>194</sup> The presence of the then still popular TV preacher Abdullah Gymnastiar and the participation of Muhammadiyah leader Din Syamsuddin in one of the panel discussions suggest an endorsement of HTI's objectives and a sign of the organization's acceptance by the conservative Muslim mainstream.<sup>195</sup>

In his detailed account of 'the return of Pancasila', François Raillon touches on yet another meeting taking place on the very day of the 'Declaration of Indonesianness' gathering of 1 June 2006. Hosted by Suharto's former vice president (1993–8), General Try Sutrisno, this meeting included former Defense Minister and perpetual presidential hopeful, General Wiranto; former Golkar chief and speaker of the parliament, Akbar Tanjung; Taufiq Kiemas, the late husband of former President Megawati Sukarnoputri; former President Abdurrahman Wahid; ex-Finance Minister Fuad Bawazier; and media tycoon Djafar Assegaf. Whereas Sutrisno regarded the shared values of Pancasila as a guarantee for safeguarding Indonesia's 'complex religious and ethnic diversity', it should not be reduced to a prescription for a particular law of life, in which 'formal democratic procedures are being abused to weaken and undermine social cohesion'.<sup>196</sup> The meeting resulted not only in a joint statement, called the *Pernyataan 1 Juni 2006 Purwakarta 6* (a reference to the address of General Sutrisno's house); Raillon thinks that it also laid the foundations for a short-lived ad hoc coalition between PDI-P and Golkar in the run-up to the 2009 presidential elections. Even though the coalition collapsed as both parties eventually backed their own candidates (Megawati Sukarnoputri and Yusuf Kalla), the fact that major political players jumped on the bandwagon of this 'Declaration of Indonesianness' demonstrates that the political stakes of a confrontation over Pancasila are high. It also shows that the

ideological antagonism between the two opposite sides on the Muslim spectrum should not be relegated to a mere irreconcilable polarity between intellectual views of the role of religion in public life.

The meeting at Purwakarta 6 evinces the manipulation of ideological debates and intellectual discussions by the political elite for securing their own vested interests. Further affirmation for this reading is not just the parallel between the *Maklumat Keindonesiaan* and *Pernyataan 1 Juni Purwakarta 6*, but also the way that Pancasila has been deployed as a shield against campaigns to revive the Jakarta Charter. The political machinations of June 2006 are also reminiscent of the 1990 hijacking and transformation of a student initiative for a symposium of Muslim intellectuals into the government-approved ICMI. These stratagems add to the scepticism of the educated middle classes regarding the political process, because—although they are aware of such manipulations—at the same time they remain too peripheral to these developments to be able to influence them. It also feeds into the frustrations of the Muslim intelligentsia, resulting in the increased antagonism between different camps moving in opposite directions in their continued efforts to keep Islam relevant to public life and help develop alternative ways for plotting Indonesia's future.

A further indication of this growing polarization between reactionary Muslim vigilantes and progressive activists, and signaling a resurfacing of violent intolerance, occurred on Pancasila Day 2008. Worried about the government's 'ambiguity or procrastination when it comes to dealing with extremists', AKKBB activists and members of the *Maklumat Keindonesiaan* group gathered at the National Monument in Jakarta, using the occasion to urge the government to uphold the values of Pancasila and not succumb to pressures to outlaw the Ahmadiyyah Movement, as advised in another MUI fatwa which had been passed at the same session in 2005 as Fatwa 7. The mass gathering was set upon by mobs from the Islam Defenders Front (FPI), resulting in many of the pro-Pancasila activists being hospitalized with injuries, including ICIP director Syafi'i Anwar.<sup>197</sup> Thus, the contrasting views of the relation between Pancasila and religion—in this case Islam—carry over into issues of law-giving, pluralism and religious toleration.



## THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC LAW?

### LEGAL FORMALISTS VERSUS SUBSTANTIVISTS

Political maneuvering between 1999 and 2002 frustrated the renewed attempts by Muslim activists and politicians to include a reference to Islamic law in the Indonesian constitution, leaving the Jakarta Charter, once again, dead in the water. Proponents of the formalization of Islamic law were thus forced to look for alternative trajectories. A new window of opportunity was provided by another accomplishment of *Reformasi*: The decentralization of state administration and the devolution of powers from the central government to provincial and local authorities. It may be tempting to consider this approach as a mere opportunistic step towards a stealthy ‘shari‘atization’ of Indonesia’s legal system through localized initiatives towards Islamic legislation known as *perda syariat*, an abbreviation of *peraturan daerah syariat* or ‘regional shari‘a order’.<sup>1</sup> However, such an interpretation is incomplete and inaccurate, as there are deeper reasons behind the importance that Muslims attach to the notion of shari‘a.

Although on the opposite end of the ideological spectrum in terms of the formalist–legal aspects of Islamic law, proponents of a substantive interpretation of shari‘a are not disputing its significance for the Muslim worldview and the possibility of finding some accommodation within Indonesia’s legal architecture. On the contrary, fundamental intellectual debates on the role of religion in Muslim societies revolve

around this central and yet illusively abstract notion of shari'a. Moreover, friend and foe are also in agreement that *fiqh*—jurisprudence—was and actually still is the queen of sciences within traditional Islamic learning. When discussing the NU's continuous reinterpretation of the meaning of *Aswaja*, I already touched on the fact that *fiqh* was identified as the best developed discipline in comparison with the two other parts of its intellectual triad: theology (*kalam*) and sufism (*tasawwuf*). Correspondingly, the rethinking of the NU's role following the decision to return to the *Khittah* 1926 is characterized as 'the total fiqh approach'.<sup>2</sup> In this context, *fiqh* should not just be understood as referring to jurisprudence in a narrow legalistic sense. The opponents of the formal Islamization of Indonesia's legal system have a more expansive view of shari'a. Instead of dealing with juridical technicalities—or debating the foundations underlying the practice of jurisprudence, a methodological sub-discipline known as *usul al-fiqh*—they advocate an even more fundamental philosophical discussion on the objectives underlying shari'a as a conceptualization of equity and justice. This further abstraction takes the whole matter of legal thought into the domains of philosophy, in particular hermeneutics and ethics. Since the classical era this has been dealt with by another sub-discipline within the tradition of Islamic learning, known as *maqasid al-shari'a*—the 'higher objectives of shari'a'.<sup>3</sup>

To understand how these two apparently disparate trajectories stand in relation to each other, it is instructive to assess them in the light of a recent reformulation of what constitutes a tradition, with special reference to the Indonesian case. Critical of both essentialist readings of Islamic law and disintegrative interpretations of Muslim legal traditions, Michael Feener and Mark Cammack draw on the philosopher and ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre's definition, which conceives of tradition 'as an argument extended through time' between external criticisms and internal interpretive debates regarding a 'set of fundamental agreements'. Also integrated into their rereading is Talal Asad's anthropological analysis of religions as 'discursive traditions', which—although conceptualized differently—all find their articulation in diverse 'forms of life'.<sup>4</sup> When talking about Indonesian Muslim theoretical and practical engagements with law and its implementation, Feener and Cammack offer a more subtle alternative that avoids a reductionist discussion of a meta-narrative called 'Islamic law' drawn from classical texts largely written in Arabic, or that succumbs to a fragmentary representation of lived

local Muslim legal traditions which are—wilfully or unwittingly—divorced from that underlying historical body of texts. Instead, their reading seeks to strike a balance. On the one hand, there is the coherence and continuity of Indonesian discourses on an intellectual tradition shared with the rest of the Muslim world and maintained through the engagement with an Arabic canon. On the other hand, there is the simultaneous attempt to preserve a dynamic diversity through interpretation in line with local cultural contexts.

This approach also corresponds to John Bowen's notion of 'discursive practices', which was briefly mentioned in the opening chapter. Bowen applies this in his ethnographic work which examines the way Indonesians manage to deal with the challenges of living in a deeply pluralistic society through the lens of legal anthropology.<sup>5</sup> In these projects, he defines *fiqh* as 'a human effort to resolve disputes by drawing on scripture, logic, the public interest, local custom, and the consensus of the community'.<sup>6</sup> Bowen's anthropology of public reason deconstructs these discursive formations, demonstrating that they remain grounded in comprehensive doctrines, but also retain 'specific understandings of Islam and particular *adat*-based conceptions of the world'.<sup>7</sup> To facilitate a 'full appreciation of conflict, incompatibility, and change in social life', legal and normative orders are taken to stand in a dynamic relationship with the societies they seek to regulate.<sup>8</sup> This also helps explain the emergence of diverging 'centripetal movements', advocating either *perda syariat* or proposing the upholding of universal human rights standards against the background of the unguided chaos during the early post-Suharto years. This push and pull in apparently opposite directions manifests the normative entanglements of Indonesia's moral florescence or 'value pluralism'.<sup>9</sup> It also reflects a 'double movement of reference': one directed inwards to emphasize authentic Indonesianness, and the other outwards in the direction of universal and transcultural values of equity and justice.<sup>10</sup>

Examining formalist interpretations of Islamic law and substantivist meditations on shari'a with all this in mind will show that these seemingly counterposed approaches do not stand in the kind of dichotomous relationship that is so often assumed. The formalist understanding of the letter of the law that underlies the *perda syariat* initiatives, generally associated with conservative classical or reactionary Salafi thinking originating from the Middle East, is transposed and implemented in specific local Indonesian settings. But also the hermeneuti-

cal discussions of reconciling the eternal spirit of the law with contemporary conditions continues to draw on the body of classical Arabic texts from the Middle Eastern and North African ‘heartlands’ of the Muslim world. Tracing the intellectual genealogies of their respective agendas, by investigating the relevant discourses, will result in the collapse of the allegedly neat binary opposition between formalist and substantive approaches to Muslim traditions of legal thinking. The distinctions between the two are much fuzzier than often realized, and the antagonism between the two camps is less due to irreconcilable intellectual disagreements than to different ways of responding to the feelings of dissatisfaction with the way the political process has been unfolding since 1998, as well as a sense of insecurity brought about by the continued dominance of political elites, despite the anticipation of genuine change in the post-Suharto *Reformasi*.

*The context: Indonesian fiqh, national madhhab, and the role of Muslim intellectuals*

By way of concrete contextualization, it is important to be aware of the historical grounding of the current discourses on Islamic law and Indonesian legal traditions. Without going back too far in time, for contemporary debates on law it will suffice to discuss the theoretical work on Islam and Indonesian law that can be traced to late colonial and early postcolonial Muslim intellectuals, such as Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy (1904–75) and Hazairin (born as Gelar Pangeran Alamsyah Harahap, 1906–75). In addition, I will also highlight some surprising statements and unexpected sides to the writings of former Masyumi politicians and DDII activists Mohammad Natsir (1908–93) and Anwar Harjono (1923–99).

Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy’s family belonged to the religious scholarly elite from Aceh, but aside from a traditional *ulama* training, he also familiarized himself with Islamic reformism and even studied at an Al-Irsyad school in Surabaya.<sup>11</sup> Although associated with both the Muhammadiyah and the more puritan *Persatuan Islam* (PERSIS), and serving briefly as a Masyumi politician in the Constituent Assembly (1956–9), Ash Shiddieqy’s main occupation in independent Indonesia was in academia. Eventually rising to the post of Dean of the Faculty of Shari’a at IAIN Yogyakarta in 1960, he also served as a professor and guest lecturer at other Islamic universities in Aceh, Semarang and

Surakarta.<sup>12</sup> The greatest intellectual influence on Ash Shiddieqy came from the Egyptian Azhar Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut (1893–1963), with whom he shared an interest in demystifying Islamic scholarship in order to make it more accessible to Muslims without backgrounds in traditional Islamic learning.<sup>13</sup> It also led him to the conviction that the Muslim tradition could only be properly appreciated through the study of its historical development (*tarikh tashri'*), so that its doctrinal and legal positions can be contextualized and reinterpreted in the light of contemporary circumstances.<sup>14</sup> In order to be able to do that, Ash Shiddieqy considered it imperative to first disentangle a conflation of three terms that was obscuring the proper understanding of Islamic law. Legal scholars from faculties of law at secular universities generally use the term *hukum Islam* for Islamic law, whereas their colleagues at Islamic State Universities and other institutions managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs tended to fall into a rather cavalier mixing up of shari'a and *fiqh*, leading them to 'suggest that both are universal, absolute and everlasting'.<sup>15</sup> According to Yudian Wahyudi, a professor in the philosophy of law at UIN Yogyakarta, even very prominent and senior scholars such as Ali Yafie and Ibrahim Hosen (1917–2001) subscribed to this conflation and used it as an argument to dismiss the need for an adaptation of *fiqh* in accordance with Indonesia's specific circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Ash Shiddieqy however insisted that, as 'law *in abstracto*', only shari'a can be considered as universal and eternal, whereas *fiqh* as 'law *in concreto*' deals with specifics and is therefore subject to change.<sup>17</sup>

The puritan in Ash Shiddieqy saw his intellectual labors also as a contribution to the purification of Islam, presenting a 'return to the Qur'an and Sunna' as the appropriate starting point for the transformation of a generic understanding of *fiqh* to an interpretation which would take the Indonesian context into account.<sup>18</sup> The legislative intentions of the Qur'an are not meant to complicate things, but to provide Muslims with clear rules for the acts of worship (*'ibadat*) and general guidelines for human interaction (*mu'amalat*), whereas the Sunna of the Prophet, captured in the authoritative Hadith Collections, provide detailed elaborations of these Qur'anic provisions. Notwithstanding this seemingly scripturalist orientation, Ash Shiddieqy remained always open to writings of different legal traditions and schools of thought, a practice known as *talfiq*, which had also been pursued by Shaltut and—before him—by the great nineteenth-century Muslim reformist

Muhammad Abduh.<sup>19</sup> To this end, Ash Shiddieqy also attached great importance to the comparative study of jurisprudence and text compilations of the differences of opinion among legal scholars. His aim was ‘not only to transcend established *madhhab* boundaries, but also to construct a new system of distinctively “Indonesian fiqh”, or *Fikih Indonesia*’, which was to be developed in accordance with ‘Indonesian personality and characteristics’.<sup>20</sup>

Such a creative operation requires a reinvigorated exercise in *ijtihad*, or independent reasoning; it evinces a balancing of the eternal imperatives of the Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet, local culture and practice, and the needs of a community at that particular point in time.<sup>21</sup> However, in Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy’s view, that interpretative endeavour is no longer to be executed by individual scholars advancing their own respective findings, but through a collaborative effort called *ijtihad jama’i*, or ‘collective *ijtihad*’, because this would offer qualitatively better interpretations than the insight of a single expert.<sup>22</sup> In effect, it also meant a revision of the notion of *ijma’*, or consensus of scholars, identifying it—alongside instruments such as reasoning by analogy, juristic preference, public interest and custom—as one of the sources and methods for this new collective *ijtihad*.<sup>23</sup> In order to execute this new interpretative exercise, Feener reports that Ash Shiddieqy proposed to establish a body of scholars composed of academics he had trained at the IAIN and appoint them to what in the tradition is called the *ahl al-hall wa’l-‘aqd*, or ‘people who can loosen and bind’ (those holding authority).<sup>24</sup> However, that is a case of simplification and does not accurately reflect what Ash Shiddieqy had in mind. Yudian Wahyudi says that Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy’s understanding of *ahl al-hall wa’l-‘aqd* makes a distinction between the political institution and the legislative institution.<sup>25</sup> In modern times the former consists of those serving in a legislative assembly elected by the people, while the latter consists of a body of experts competent in interpretative exercises (*ahl al-ijtihad*), supported by academic specialists in relevant juridical disciplines (*ahl al-ikhtisas*).<sup>26</sup> Ash Shiddieqy also stressed that their competence and authority in developing an Indonesian *fiqh* is restricted to those parts of jurisprudence that do not deal with the ‘*ibadat*—the acts of worship which have been definitively fixed.<sup>27</sup> This means that their authority is restricted to the domain of human interaction, or *mu’amalat*, which consist of so-called *zanni*, or ‘non-categorical’ acts, as opposed to *qat’i*, or ‘categorical’ and ‘definitive’ acts.<sup>28</sup>

Ash Shiddieqy saw this as a way of reconciling doctrinal purification with a discursive Indonesianization of the Islamic legal tradition. In this regard, Feener rightly points to the resemblance between Fazlur Rahman's method of the 'Double Movement' and Ash Shiddieqy's procedure of looking back at the sources and then turning towards the contemporary situation. A connection which Feener does not make is between the latter's suggestion that the conventional essentialist view of what constitutes Islamic law is more accurately characterized as 'Arab *fiqh*' and Abdurrahman Wahid's criticism of attempts to Arabize Indonesian Islam.<sup>29</sup> Like the former NU leader, for Ash Shiddieqy too, developing an Indonesian *fiqh* meant liberating Indonesian customs from undesirable Middle Eastern influences, or as he puts it: 'what is sound and suitable *hadith* and sound and suitable *ijma'* should not always be considered suitable to Indonesian society'.<sup>30</sup>

Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy's contemporary Hazairin had a similar interest in promoting a distinctly Indonesian version of Islamic law, but on account of his training as a specialist in *adat*, or customary law, he approached the subject from a different direction. Both as juridical practice and as a field of academic inquiry, the study of *adat* had been developed by scholars associated with the Netherlands colonial administration, such as Christian Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) but especially Cornelis van Vollenhoven (1874–1933). The latter was largely responsible for codifying various regional systems of *adat*, and for convincing the Netherlands Indies government to privilege these legal traditions over the application of Islamic law.<sup>31</sup> Thus van Vollenhoven's reinterpretation of Reception Theory, whereby law is not automatically adjusted after the occurrence of religious conversion, triumphed over the view of L. W. C. van den Berg (1845–1927), who had argued that by their very act of conversion Indonesian Muslims had implicitly accepted all laws of their new faith, or what in technical terms is called a *receptio in complexu*.<sup>32</sup> Hazairin had studied under van Vollenhoven's pupil Barend ter Haar (1892–1941), and eventually received a doctorate from the Batavia School of Law.<sup>33</sup> After working for a number of years in the colonial courts, after Indonesia gained its independence Hazairin returned to academia; lecturing at Universitas Indonesia and serving on the board of the infant IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. This scholarly career was briefly interrupted by a stint as Minister of Home Affairs in 1953–4.

Unlike Ash Shiddieqy, Hazairin never received any formal Islamic religious training and was for that reason not recognized by traditional

*ulama* as ‘fulfilling the technical requirements of a *mujtahid*’—someone authorized to engage in *ijtihad*.<sup>34</sup> However, he was a perceptive student of Islam with a keen ability for reflective thinking about religion. For example, his distinction between ‘knowing Islam’ and ‘knowledge of Islam’, advanced in an address he gave in 1951, foreshadows similar insights which were much later developed and articulated by Muslim scholars of religion and intellectuals such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Abdolkarim Soroush.<sup>35</sup> Students at the IAINs, and comparable institutions of higher learning, should concentrate on acquiring knowledge of Islam by combining the study of traditional Islamic subjects with modern sciences. Hazairin shared Ash Shiddieqy’s ambition ‘to see a new generation of scholars working within the context of a modern and distinctly Indonesian national *madhhab*’.<sup>36</sup> Feener interprets Hazairin’s introduction of the term ‘*madzhab nasional*’, which actually predates Ash Shiddieqy’s use of *Fikih Indonesia*, as a reflection of the former’s ‘nationalistic orientation’.<sup>37</sup> I propose that from an intellectual–historical perspective—and in line with Hazairin’s professional expertise—it can also be read as a concern for the institutionalization of juridical practice outweighing the interest in developing an alternative substantive legal discourse, for which he was less equipped.

Another difference in accentuation between the approaches of Ash Shiddieqy and Hazairin is that, given his specialization in *adat* law, Hazairin put a stronger emphasis on the role of indigenous customs because of their potential to offset the alien Arabian facets of Islamic law with more acceptable local cultural features; thus turning the legal precepts inherited from the Middle East into a living legal practice that would better suit the Indonesian situation. Whereas Ash-Shiddieqy drew inspiration from fellow *ulama*, such as Mahmud Shaltut, and developed a religious studies approach which eventually found further articulation and a much wider circulation through the work of Fazlur Rahman, Hazairin turned to cultural anthropology to aid his interpretation of the Qur’an in line with the requirements and challenges faced by his Muslim contemporaries in Indonesia. Together with his knowledge of customary law, such studies acutely attuned his sensibility to the distinction between *adat* and *agama*, or religion, which resulted in a rather abrupt reversal of position for someone who was originally trained by colonial *adat* specialists. As his moral compass was firmly guided by Islamic ethical and legal principles, while the ideology of nationalism provided an anchorage for the varieties in regional cus-



tomary law and multiple adaptations of shari‘a into local settings, Hazairin insisted that ‘religion was to be the measure of the validity of *adat* and not vice versa’. In doing so Hazairin assumed a position that was diametrically opposed to that of van Vollenhoven.<sup>38</sup> This meant discrediting Dutch Reception Theory advocated by van Vollenhoven’s school of *adat* specialists, which restricted the application of Islamic law to those elements that had been accepted as part of local customary legal practices. For Hazairin the rejection of Reception Theory was the first step in the Indonesianization of *fiqh*.<sup>39</sup>

According to Yudian Wahyudi, Ash Shiddieqy had a similar objective: His introduction of the term Indonesian *fiqh* was a compromise between Indonesian nationalism and Muslim reformism. By turning Indonesian customs into one of the sources of Indonesian *fiqh*, ‘he tried to render ineffective the Dutch legal politics of *divide et impera* which was inherent in the reception theory’.<sup>40</sup> In a chapter of *NU Studies* entitled ‘The Invention of “Islamic Law” and the In(ter)vention regarding Women’, Ahmad Baso returns to the same motif of legal Reception Theory as an instrument of colonial domination when writing a critique of the patriarchy characterizing the sexual and racial politics in the Dutch East Indies and shaping its juridical ramifications.<sup>41</sup> Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy’s conceptualization of an ‘Indonesian *fiqh*’, through his immersion in both classical Arabic texts and the writings of later reformists from the Middle East, and Hazairin’s stress on the role of particular cultural circumstances in shaping the Islamic content of Indonesian law, both foreshadowed comparable initiatives in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Munawir Sjadzali’s *Reaktualisasi Agenda*, Abdurrahman Wahid’s *Pribumisasi Islam*, and Masdar Mas‘udi’s transformation of the Islamic obligation of almsgiving or *zakat* into the modern concept of income tax. All these initiatives continue to form the background of discussions and debates on law among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In addition, in 1991, the New Order regime had also accommodated a formalization of Hazairin’s earlier calls for a codification of Islamic legal materials through a Presidential Decree on Islamic Law Compilation (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, KHI-Inpres).<sup>42</sup>

Aside from the contributions by these early postcolonial legal scholars, the writings of more politicized figures from the 1950s and 1960s, such as former prime minister and Masyumi party leader Mohammad Natsir and Anwar Harjono, his de facto successor as the head of the

DDII, also bear relevance to a proper appreciation of the current formalist and substantivist discourses on the place of Islamic law in Indonesia. Like Hazairin, Mohammad Natsir was largely self-taught in things Islamic. Perhaps as a consequence of that he 'did not put much emphasis on legal matters' during the first decades of Indonesian independence.<sup>43</sup> This was in marked contrast with the NU leadership of the 1950s, which had an ambition to establish a body of religious scholars for settling legal cases on the basis of its interpretation of *fiqh*. However, in his voluminous writings, Natsir consistently argued for an understanding of Islam as a totalizing worldview affecting all aspects of life through the implementation of an encompassing system of law that would regulate Indonesian society. What made his equation of 'the ideology of Islam with a philosophy of life (*falsafah hidup*) in which considerations of the world beyond (*akhirah*) can never be separated from the affairs of this world (*dunya*)' so interesting is that it was built on the work of an Orientalist scholar of Islam like Hamilton Gibb, while employing categories borrowed from other Western scholars such as Emile Durkheim and William James.<sup>44</sup>

Initially, Natsir searched for a compromise between Islam and shari'a as the foundations of state and law, on the one hand, and the Pancasila Doctrine on the other. However, as his political disagreements with Sukarno grew increasingly edgy, culminating in a decisive rupture during the Guided Democracy years, Natsir took this as the inevitable outcome of the confrontation between political Islam and secular nationalism. This presents a marked departure from the conciliatory pragmatism of his fellow Sumatran Hazairin. However, it prefigures the continuing discord between the government and DDII—and its *tarbiyah* offspring during New Order and *Reformasi*. The intellectual watershed, which eventually became also an ideological breaking point, is found in Natsir's address to the session of the Constituent Assembly, which dragged on from 1956 until 1959. In this speech Natsir contrasted the 'colorless neutrality' of Pancasila with the vitality of shari'a as 'living law'.<sup>45</sup> Rejecting an Islamic state controlled by religious scholars, Natsir proposed a 'Theistic Democracy' roughly corresponding to Assyaukanie's Islamic Democratic State (IDS) model, which sets limits to the use of human reason on the basis of God-given 'universal moral principles' in much the same way as certain Natural Law discourses developed in medieval Christendom and later Western thinking.<sup>46</sup> Aside from direct references to Thomas Aquinas, which are

already extraordinary for a Muslim politician from Indonesia, Natsir's largely secular colonial education in Dutch and his training in other European languages enabled him to become part of a virtual international conversation with neo-Thomist revivalists and other new interpreters of Natural Law, such as Jacques Maritain and Leo Strauss. These ideas were very influential in the middle of the last century and have left an indelible imprint on the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. His knowledge of European languages also gave Natsir access to Orientalist scholarship on Muslim thinkers such as Miskawayh, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Tufayl—all of whom feature in his writings of the 1950s.<sup>47</sup> Such interest is all the more remarkable in view of the course of his later career, because these figures would be controversial—if not outright objectionable—to Natsir's future fellow-activists in the DDII and to its foreign sponsors.

A further irony in the present context is that, in the mid-1950s, some of these publications by Natsir appeared in a short-lived periodical called *Progressive Islam*.<sup>48</sup> In the wake of the repression of Masyumi in the early 1960s, and the continued frustration of Natsir's political ambitions in the face of the equally intransigent New Order regime, his own position hardened. From then on he referred no longer to Natural Law, but began developing 'his ideas under the rubric of *Sunnatullah* (literally, the Way of God)'—presented as an Islamic alternative to natural law principles.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, he began to insist on the need for implementing shari'a as positive law, thus prefiguring a development that would gain momentum when the opportunity of *perda syaria* arose in the post-Suharto years. Following the establishment of the DDII in the late 1960s, his writings on *dakwah* began to feature a more pronounced legalistic terminology, including the title of his most systematic and elaborate publication on the subject, *Fiqhud-Da'wah*, notwithstanding the fact that it 'little resembles a traditional work of Muslim jurisprudence and is not a *fiqh* book'.<sup>50</sup> Without any references to either the classical or modern literature on Islamic jurisprudence, it functions more as a training manual for religious propagation with guidelines for persuasive argumentation against sceptics and opponents on the basis of strong knowledge of Islam.

As a member of a younger generation and the leader of the DDII after Natsir's death in 1993, Anwar Harjono acknowledges the influence of Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy and Hazairin on his thinking about law. He even pursued a PhD under the latter's co-supervision together with

Mohammed Rasjidi. However, at that time Harjono was less interested in the minutiae of the implementation of law or details of legal interpretations, preferring instead to focus on capturing the spirit of shari'a.<sup>51</sup> Although he acknowledged that the Qur'an does not provide a detailed legal code, he insisted that a living law needs to be developed from the authoritative sources through 'a kind of intuitive *ijtihad*' in the light of the earlier mentioned notion of *Sunnatullah*. Not dissimilar to Hazairin's privileging of religion over customary law, Harjono too thought that:

[...] if there appears to be a conflict between Shari'a and contemporary social realities, it is not the law of Islam that must bent to fit the context, but rather various times and places must pull themselves into line with the law of Islam.<sup>52</sup>

These were his views in 1963, but eventually Harjono shifted even closer to the literalist scripturalism that resonated well with the views of the DDII's financial donors in the Gulf States. Increasingly, publications relied on the influence of scholars and jurists such as the Egyptian exile in Qatar, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and the elite of Saudi Arabia's religious establishment, including Abd al-Aziz bin Baz, Muhammad Salih al-Uthaymin, Abdallah al-Jubrin and Salih Al Fawzan.<sup>53</sup>

In terms of the practical implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia, Yudian Wahyudi includes the promulgation of the Marriage Act under Law 1 of 1974 and Law 7 of 1989 on Religious Courts as achievements resulting from Ash Shiddieqy and Hazairin's preparatory work on the development of an Indonesian variant of *fiqh* and a *madhhab nasional* respectively. A contemporary institutionalization of the role of *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd* had been formalized through the 1975 establishment of a Council of Religious Scholars (MUI) as a body of religious scholars competent in interpretative exercises (*ahl al-ijtihad*), later supplemented with ICMI in the supporting role of organic academic specialists (*ahl al-ikhtisas*).<sup>54</sup> Further evidence of the impact of Ash Shiddieqy's theoretical work is that the presentation of MUI's pronouncements are instances of 'collective *ijtihad*'.<sup>55</sup>

Given the continued clampdown on the politicization of Islam, there is a certain irony to New Order's promulgation of MUI in 1975, but it fits with the consistent desire of Indonesian governments to keep public religion in check through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, under whose auspices MUI would operate. This also explains why many *ulama* and Muslim intellectuals greeted the initiative with suspicion

when it was first proposed five years earlier. Even its first chairman, the modernist Muslim activist and man of letters Hamka, was among the original sceptics.<sup>56</sup> Although a new development on the national level, MUI's establishment was not without precedent in various regions of Indonesia, where there had been local *ulama* councils in West Java (1958), Aceh (1965), West Sumatra (1966) and South Sulawesi (1970). Interestingly, these are the same areas where the *perda syariat* initiatives of the *Reformasi* era were to be pursued with the greatest vigor. Throughout the Suharto years, MUI was primarily regarded as a translator of the New Order's development policy and the government's advisory body on religious issues, but without ever becoming involved in any practical initiatives. Additionally, it was also acting as a mediator between the government and the *ulama*, offering the latter a forum to discuss problems that were relevant to their function.<sup>57</sup>

With the fall of Suharto in 1998 and the disappearance of the New Order a year later, MUI expanded its membership beyond *ulama* from NU, Muhammadiyah and PERSIS backgrounds, and experts from Islamic banks and other organizations, to include also representatives of FKASWJ, FPI and HTI, all of which had remained very critical of MUI until the end of Suharto's rule.<sup>58</sup> In contrast to the New Order years, during the *Reformasi* years MUI began establishing its independence, even explicitly distancing itself from the state during Abdurrahman Wahid's term in office when he began entertaining the possibility of legalizing communism and establishing commercial relations with Israel.<sup>59</sup> This new assertiveness is also reflected in the way MUI redefined itself by invoking the traditional position of the *ulama* as 'heirs to the Prophets'.<sup>60</sup> The organization's vision statement of 2000 includes among its tasks the obligation captured in the Islamic maxim 'propagation of virtue and prohibition of vice'. In addition, MUI would act as 'guide and servant of the community' and an agent of 'reform and renewal', for which the document employs the Arabic expression '*islah wa'l-tajdid*'. By issuing both requested and uninvited fatwas, MUI sought to transform itself from a 'state-oriented to being an Umma-oriented organization'.<sup>61</sup> However, this claim of new and expanded authority did not go unchallenged. Using the distinction made by the Khaled Abou El Fadl between 'being an authority' on the basis of knowledge, wisdom and superior understanding, and 'being in authority' through coercion, the Director of the Wahid Institute, Ahmad Suaedy, observed that MUI had managed to monopolize the

right of interpretation thanks to SBY's government's tendency to defer to MUI in religious matters.<sup>62</sup> In an interview he also expressed his concern over the fact that the president relied on the conservative head of MUI's fatwa drafting committee, Ma'ruf Amin, rather than on his Minister of Religious Affairs.<sup>63</sup> Especially after the issue of the 2005 fatwas, Muslim intellectuals as different as Rumadi, Budhy Munawar-Rachman and HTI's Farid Wajdi questioned not just the binding status of the fatwas, but also whether the interpretations they contained were appropriate or even correct.<sup>64</sup>

This independence is also reflected in the nature of its fatwas and non-legal recommendations or admonitions, known as *tausiyahs*, which shifted from remaining generally supportive of the government during the interim-presidency of B. J. Habibie to becoming increasingly critical during Abdurrahman Wahid's term in office.<sup>65</sup> It is ironic that this shift took place when both the head of state and the general chairmen of MUI came from NU backgrounds. However, this split among senior Muslim traditionalists is reflective of the conservative turn that began to affect the two largest Muslim mass organizations in the course of the first decade of the new century, making the position of progressive-minded intellectuals within their own organizations, but also in Indonesian Muslim society at large, increasingly precarious. Earlier disagreements between the then incumbent MUI chairman Ali Yafie and Abdurrahman Wahid had already led to the former's decision to step down as one of the deputy chairmen of the NU. When Wahid ascended to the presidency it resulted in Yafie's resignation from his MUI post in 2000 as well. However, under the direction of its new chairman, Sahal Mahfudh, and the head of the organization's fatwa drafting committee, MUI began formulating statements that were not just critical of government policy, but eventually touched on the very foundations of the Indonesian state. One explanation for this shift is the entry of new Muslim movements into the MUI organization. According to MUI's articles of association, the quota of representation is proportionate to the number of organizations in existence, not their respective numbers of followers. Thus reactionary movements like FPI are treated on an equal footing with mass organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah.<sup>66</sup>

The developments sketched so far show a collapse of the neat divisions between so-called formalist and substantivist approaches to Islamic law. Legal scholars working on a new Islamic jurisprudence for

an independent Indonesia drew on an eclectic mix of texts from the classical *fiqh* canon and its subsidiary disciplines; reformist Islamic thought; the regional systems of Indonesian customary law; and cultural anthropology. Politician-activists pushing Islamist agendas that assertively challenge the *ghazwul fikr* from the West and what they referred to as its local stooges having immersed themselves in the philosophy of natural law, the writings of medieval Christian theologians and their near-contemporary Muslim counterparts, as well as European and American neo-Thomist philosophers, sociologists and psychologists of religion—subjects and interests generally considered anathema by Salafis. These intellectual genealogies reveal the multi-faceted make-up of both the progressive and reactionary Muslim discourses. In terms of intellectual historiography, it appears that religious scholars take their secular occupations seriously. However, when dealing with matters of law, the distinction between intellectuals as legislators and interpreters tends to become fuzzy. Such insights should invite observers to call into question the alleged binary opposition between these two ways of engaging with the legacy of legal thinking within the wider Islamic heritage, and challenge the idea that the differences in intellectual outlook are insurmountable or irreconcilable. Instead, the possibility must be entertained that the assumed dichotomy is false. Just as with the disagreements on Pancasila and the Jakarta Charter, the disjunction between advocating a formalist implementation of Islamic law and a substantive reinterpretation of its moral imperatives are a result of actual political events, rather than purely intellectual decisions or even ideological incentives for moving into different directions. Each in their own way reflect similar frustrations, sharing the same scepticism about the existing system of governance and how the political game plays out.

*Formalizing Islamic law: the localized shari'atization of Indonesia's legal system*

As discussed above, under the New Order, proponents of the introduction and implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia had been partially successful in obtaining formal recognition of a marriage act, the law on religious courts of 1989 and the Islam Law Compilation (KHI-Inpres) issued in 1991. However, when attempts to achieve a comprehensive formal acknowledgement via constitutional change in the early

*Reformasi* years had been frustrated, advocates of Islamic law were forced to explore new avenues for reaching that objective. Whereas the much-criticized switch by PKS leader Hidayat Nur Wahid from campaigning for the implementation of the Jakarta Charter to supporting the Medina Charter meant sacrificing the enshrining of Islamic law in the constitution in favor of an Islamic societal model that is more congenial to the plurality of Indonesian society, the changing climate brought about by the conservative turn in the top echelons of the NU and Muhammadiyah was nevertheless conducive to fulfilling some of the ambitions of proponents of a further institutionalization of Islamic law.<sup>67</sup> The first instance providing supporters of formalist interpretations of Islamic law with an opportunity to introduce relevant regulations on the local and provincial levels was the administrative decentralization and devolution of powers from the central government to regional authorities.

*Case study: perda syariat in Aceh*

Developments in the northern Sumatran province of Aceh offer one of the more high-profile case studies of the *perda syariat* process, and an instructive example of how the issue is manipulated by national and regional political actors alike. Interestingly, the initiative did not even originate locally, but was facilitated by the central government as a result of its changing strategy in dealing with the threat of secessionism in this historically troublesome and turbulent region. This ‘top-down, political elite-driven project’ intent on discrediting separatists pushed local actors into a reactive role.<sup>68</sup> When regime change took place in 1998, neither the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM), which was waging an armed struggle against Jakarta, nor local religious scholars, critical students and other activists campaigning for a referendum on independence had the introduction of Islamic law on their agendas.<sup>69</sup> Instead it was the Jakarta-appointed governor, police and military commanders, along with local politicians supported by an ‘Indonesianized’ business middle class, as well as local *ulama*, academics and other intellectuals associated with centralized organizations, such as MUI, IAIN al-Raniry and ICMI, who proposed ‘transforming Islamic Shari’a into Shari’atized [positive] law’ as part of a federalization of Indonesia—which was also intended to transfer a greater share of natural resources revenue to Aceh.<sup>70</sup> Other nation-



wide-operating movements associated with Indonesia's Islamization drive, such as FPI, HTI, Laskar Jihad and MMI, did not make their appearances felt locally until after the Tsunami disaster of 2004.

Instead of solely relying on military force, as had been the habit of the previous regime, at the instigation of MUI the transitional government of B. J. Habibie had put out some feelers and decided to abolish Aceh's status as a Military Operation Zone, even offering an apology for the behavior of the armed forces towards the local population.<sup>71</sup> The subsequent administrations of Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri changed the national policy towards Aceh by opting for a 'religious approach', both issuing Presidential Instructions to this effect in April and October 2001 respectively. Acknowledging armed separatism as an expression of local social discontent, 'the instructions express pessimism about the chances of achieving a resolution through the use of "persuasion and dialogue" in negotiations'. As part of 'more comprehensive steps in the field of politics, economics, law, social order, security, and information and communications', Jakarta realized that the region must be accorded some kind of special consideration.<sup>72</sup> Instead of the usual military and security authorities, the presidential decrees instructed the Ministry of Religious Affairs to secure the local situation by appealing to religious values which resonated in Acehnese culture. This took shape in the form of Law 18/2001 on 'Special Autonomy for the Privileged Province of Aceh as the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam' (NAD Act), which provided the statute for the local establishment of Shari'a Courts and the implementation of shari'a.<sup>73</sup> In characterizing this new strategy, Moch Nur Ichwan draws on the post-modernist jargon of Jacques Lacan, when he suggests that 'in the first years of the twenty-first century Shari'a discourse has come to serve as a "master signifier" in Aceh'.<sup>74</sup> This proposition also reflects the alternative of looking at religio-legal traditions as discursive formations emerging from the contestation of political power between officialdom and (organic) intellectuals, instead of a domain of technicalities exclusively reserved for specialist scholars.

At the same time, the central government was sending mixed signals. When independent Acehnese *ulama* organized themselves in the Aceh Ulama Council (HUDA) and tried using the newly established Consultative Assembly of Ulama (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama*, MPU) to take on a more proactive role in the shari'atization process, these attempts were frustrated by other scholars associated with MUI

operating in alliance with government and military leaders, in order to ensure that the central government retained control of the *perda syariat* process. When the conflict between the central government and GAM began to escalate once again, even though another instruction issued by Megawati in early 2002 reiterated the use of a religious approach to ensure Indonesia's territorial integrity, this was followed by increased martial rhetoric and, eventually, the declaration of a state of emergency in Aceh in May 2003.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, even after issuing this Presidential Decision to implement the NAD, its exact intentions remained ambiguous because—although functioning as a master signifier—there was a 'disconnect between the discourses on the Shari'a for Aceh at the level of the central government and locally in Aceh'.<sup>76</sup> In fact, just as with the Pancasila Doctrine, it only became possible to move the shari'atization process decisively forwards after another crisis situation arose—this time in the form of a natural disaster: The 2004 Tsunami.<sup>77</sup> In tracing this trajectory, a distinction must be made between the institutional aspects of Aceh's shari'atization and the material law included in its *perda syariat*.

In 1970, the Acehnese Shari'a Courts (*mahkamah syariah*) had been integrated into the Indonesian national legal system and—as part of the 1989 Religious Judicature Act—renamed religious courts (*pengadilan agama*). In line with the competence and authority of religious courts elsewhere in the country, also in Aceh their jurisdiction was now restricted to matters of family law, such as marriage, divorce and inheritance.<sup>78</sup> Whereas, on the one hand, the new NAD Act of 2001 sought to uphold the principle of Indonesia's Basic Law on the Judiciary, which conceived of a unified system under the auspices of the Supreme Court; on the other hand, the transformation of Aceh's religious courts back into Shari'a Courts was part of a devolution of powers to the provincial authorities.<sup>79</sup> To Jakarta, the designation 'shari'a' was merely a change of name; but from the perspective of the Acehnese government and religious establishment, renaming the religious courts was an integral part of a significant transfer of power to the province. Given the delicate nature of this regional process of shari'atization, which was seen by its proponents as putting into effect the desired social and religious ideal of a 'comprehensive (*kaffah*) implementation of Shari'a', those involved from both the regional and national sides agreed to establish a *Dinas Syariat Islam*, or Shari'a Office, charged with overseeing the introduction of *perda syariat*.<sup>80</sup>

## THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC LAW?

From the central level, the Shari‘a Office was supported by a working group under the Ministry of Home Affairs with participation of the departments of Religion and of Justice and Human Rights, as well as representatives from the policy and Supreme Court. The local religious establishment was involved through the earlier mentioned Consultative Assembly of Ulama (MPU), with further input provided by Aceh’s Muslim Youth Organization (*Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Remaja Masjid Indonesia*, BKPRMI) and academics from the province’s IAIN al-Raniry. In the wake of the 2004 Tsunami, local chapters of political parties such as PPP, PBB and PKS also began taking up the role of ‘watchdogs’, in order to ensure that the government made sincere efforts towards the implementation of the material aspects of Islamic law.<sup>81</sup> The actual enforcement of these new regulations was delegated to a special branch of the Shari‘ah Office called *Wilayatul Hisbah*, effectively acting as a kind of religious police, whereas the financial aspects were executed under the auspices of the *Baitul Mal Aceh* or Acehnese Islamic Treasury.<sup>82</sup> All these institutions were affected by Jakarta’s administrative zigzag course which seemed to characterize the whole shari‘atization process. In 2006, the *Wilayatul Hisbah* was removed from Shari‘a Office control and merged with the regular police force, while the treasury continued to be poorly managed on both provincial and municipal levels.<sup>83</sup>

### *The material law covered in perda syariat*

The mixed signals emitting from the central government also extend to the material law that was covered under the NAD Act. Examples of such ambiguities include the use of the word *qanun* for law—an Arabic term that has a decidedly secular connotation—which is now used as a general reference for *peraturan daerah*, or regional regulations, but evidently with the intention of casting them in ‘a more “Islamic” hue’.<sup>84</sup> It also applies to the Presidential Decision 11/2003 on the subject, but which nevertheless fails to provide a definition of Islamic law or clarify how it is supposed to be codified. The resulting uncertainties also affect the substantive implementation of ‘a “comprehensive Shari‘a” (*syariat Islam yang Kaffah*)’ in Aceh.<sup>85</sup> As the new master signifier, the shari‘atization of local societies has not only implications for the personal and private lives of Aceh’s citizens (both Muslim and non-Muslim); it also creates legal tensions at regional and national levels,

because no new legislation—even on purely secular matters—can be promulgated if it is considered to contradict this comprehensive understanding of Islamic law. On the basis of the legal maxim *lex specialis derogate lex generalis*, which states that a law governing a specific subject matter overrides a law which only governs general matters, this also means that Aceh's *perda syariat* take precedence over the generally applicable law elsewhere in Indonesia.<sup>86</sup>

Even before the NAD Act of 2001 had been ratified, provincial authorities in Aceh had already begun promulgating regional regulations as early as July 2000. These included a decision in which the Qur'an and Traditions of the Prophet were designated as the main sources of law, and a directive imposing an obligation on all resident Muslims to abide by all aspects of Islamic law. In order to conform to the new framework provided by the NAD Act and subsequent Presidential Decision, a new set of draft regulations pertaining to creed, worship and religious symbolism were prepared and circulated among academics from Aceh's Syah Kuala University and IAIN al-Raniry, as well as representatives from a number of NGOs, before being forwarded to Jakarta for further consideration. Subsequently, they were returned to the regional parliament, which approved them on October 2002. The regulations became law through *Qanun* 11/2002, and received presidential ratification in January of the following year.<sup>87</sup> This resulted in a normatively exclusivist definition of the Islamic creed along the lines of a conservative understanding of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* as representing acceptable Sunni orthodoxy. Other Muslims, such as the Shi'ites and offshoots like the Ahmadiyya, as well as controversial theological schools from within the Sunni tradition, such as the Mu'tazila, are considered deviations. Critical academics such as Moch Nur Ichwan anticipate that also contemporary 'liberal-progressive strains of Islamic thought will be relegated to the same category'.<sup>88</sup> This restrictive interpretation has also resulted in the inclusion of stipulations which explicitly forbid the spread of these deviant teachings and tendencies, a ruling against blasphemy, and a prohibition on conversions from Islam to another religion.

Aceh's MPU has been charged with the task of providing the Shari'a Courts with binding fatwas as to what are considered deviations from the acceptable creed. Except in the very beginning, this stipulation has not been strictly followed and most detailed regulations are being agreed through informal meetings at municipal and district level.<sup>89</sup>

Pronouncements on acts of worship and religious symbolism are more limited in scope, dealing primarily with prayer and fasting, the use of the Islamic calendar, Arabized Malay script (*jawi*) and dress codes. However, they nevertheless have ‘the potential for enormous impact on public life’, as well as ‘extending the power of the state over the personal life of Acehnese men and women’.<sup>90</sup> Three further *Qanuns* were issued prohibiting the use of intoxicants (*khamr*), gambling (*maysir*) and ‘actions involving two or more non-marriageable and non-married, mature men and women in isolated places’ (*khalwat*).<sup>91</sup> This last set of regulations has also far-reaching implications for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) issues. Transgressions carry penalties which potentially involve corporal punishment, but this matter remained unresolved until 2009, when a *Qanun Jinaya* or Islamic Criminal Legal Code was agreed. Whereas HTI, PKS and its partner student organization KAMMI had campaigned for its integral adoption and even managed to get the ruling Democrat Party on board, Aceh’s governor Irwandi Yusuf refused to sign it into law, except for the penalty of stoning for adulterers.

Such incidents demonstrate that ‘state enforcement of Islamic doctrine inevitably presents thorny political and religious issues’.<sup>92</sup> In Aceh the situation was not helped by the difficult relations between the MPU and the provincial government, especially after 2007, when GAM leader Irwandi Yusuf and the former head of SIRA, Muhammad Nazar, became Aceh’s governor and vice governor. As noted earlier, the agendas of neither one of these organizations included a proactive shari‘atization policy. In fact, both incumbents of the province’s top executive offices regard it as a political scheme originating from Jakarta. In their view, Aceh is much more in need of clear religious guidance in the fields of education and the economy rather than legal regulations pertaining to performance of religious duties or public comportment.<sup>93</sup> A particularly sensitive matter within the subnarrative of Aceh’s *perda syariat* process and shari‘a discourse as the master signifier is the regulation of houses of worship for non-Muslims. Especially after the influx of foreign relief programs in response to the Tsunami, this has resulted in sustained rumours about Christian missionary activity in Aceh which were fed by alarmist media reporting. The difficult negotiations on this topic between the governorate, MPU and HUD, which continued throughout 2007–9, are a local reflection of the nationwide polarization between advocates of greater religious

tolerance and those who have adopted a siege mentality because of the perceived threat from non-Muslims and deviant offshoots originating within the Islamic tradition.

### *Critics of perda syariat*

It is therefore not surprising that *perda syariat* initiatives remain controversial and are met with suspicion by a broad spectrum of critics, including secular nationalists, non-Muslims and progressive Muslims. They challenge this policy of enforcing religious laws on grounds that it contravenes legal uniformity by giving a privileged position to Islamic courts within the national judicial system. It not only undermines the non-sectarian intentions of Pancasila, but also carries with it the danger of reviving the Jakarta Charter which calls for the nationwide imposition of Islamic law. Dawam Rahardjo articulated these objections at the Depok Symposium where the 2006 'Declaration of Indonesianness' was prepared:

You can see that sectarian groups are now forcing their beliefs on others through bylaws and sharia. Pancasila does not take sides with one religion and does not allow the state to meddle with its people's beliefs.... But now, the state has violated its people's rights to hold on to their religion and beliefs.<sup>94</sup>

This linking of the introduction of Islamic law to compromising the Pancasila Doctrine with its underlying values of plurality and liberty also connect the *perda syariat* initiatives to growing intra-Muslim antagonism and the increased polarization following the release of the MUI fatwa in the summer of 2005, which was only made worse by the wavering attitude of the incumbent SBY administration.

Claims that pro-shari'a groups canvass little support at the national level and that effective implementation is limited to the local and district levels downplay the divisiveness of the issue, because an examination of shari'atization in Aceh shows that the issue becomes problematic when the central government plays an ambiguous role. The involvement of semi-official organizations operating on a countrywide scale and support for *perda syariat* from politicians belonging to nationalist parties, such as Golkar and the PDI-P, only lead to further aggravation, threatening Indonesia's 'social cohesion and national integration'.<sup>95</sup> Part of the dilemma is caused by the Pancasila Doctrine itself, which has turned Indonesia into a country that is neither a reli-

gious nor secular state, making it impossible for the government to remain 'neutral or inactive in matters of religion'.<sup>96</sup> Here Alfred Stepan's 'Twin Tolerations' can again help explain the way in which religion is negotiated in the public sphere, with Pancasila functioning as a Rawlsian 'overlapping consensus', involving a government trying to define religion's boundaries and Muslim organizations working towards an increased role for Islam, as they try to reach a political agreement or *modus vivendi*.<sup>97</sup> The fluidity of this situation leaves a contested space in which proponents of radical interpretations of Pancasila and Islamization battle it out.

This has become increasingly evident from 2005 onwards with the media also playing 'a significant role in promoting the term *perda syari'ah* and making it a burning issue'.<sup>98</sup> Even without clear coordination between different regional initiatives, the rhetoric produced by figures of national stature, such as the HTI's Ismail Yusanto or representatives of the MMI and FPI, reflects an attempt to consolidate support countrywide, an intention that was further demonstrated by a gathering of proponents of *perda syariat* in June 2006. These developments support the contention made throughout this book that 2005–6 was a watershed year in the intra-Muslim debates on the role of religion in Indonesian public life. Hard core proponents of shari'atization maintain that Islamic law is prescribed as an essential part of the religion's teachings and contend that the differentiation between religion and politics is artificial. Another argument they put forward is that—having conceded that the Jakarta Charter will not be part of the constitution and having agreed to substitute it with the Medina Covenant—it is now their right under the current system of freedom and democracy to work towards the implementation of Islamic law. This position is also sustained by individuals who are actually supposed to play a role in maintaining the integrity of Indonesia as a unified state, such as MUI's Ma'ruf Amin. Meanwhile, intellectuals such as Adian Husaini appeal to the very principle of pluralism, which they have fought on other occasions, to argue that Indonesia does not require a single unified legal system.<sup>99</sup> He also persists in arguing that the return to Pancasila constitutes an implicit acceptance of the Jakarta Charter. In a similar vein the HTI's Ismail Yusanto and Fahmi Amhar claim that Pancasila is an open ideology which Indonesians are free to interpret according to their own values.<sup>100</sup>

Progressive and liberal intellectuals such as Saiful Mujani and Luthfi Assyaukanie reject the argument that freedom and democracy include

a right to replace a democratic system with a non-democratic one. Assyaukanie reminds MUI that it has issued another fatwa pronouncing that the republic is final. Signatories of the *Maklumat Keindonesiaan*, including Goenawan Mohamad and Dawam Rahardjo, also point out that freedom must be interpreted in the context of Pancasila and that, while the plurality of Indonesian society may be a fact, true pluralism is to be aspired to as an ideal, so as to form the basis for a sustainable and well-integrated multi-religious society.<sup>101</sup> As advocates of a formalization of *fiqh* within the Indonesian juridical system, Deliar Noer and Yusril Ihza Mahendra hold markedly different views from organizations like the DDII, HTI, MMI or Laskar Jihad. Noer argued that implementation of Islamic law is not about enforcing its penal code, but rather about improving social conditions, working towards poverty relief and implementing educational reform. Mahendra does not even insist on substituting alternative legislation, but suggested during his term in office as Justice Minister that Islamic law should be recognized as one of the sources for legal reform.<sup>102</sup>

Abubakar Eby Hara, a senior lecturer in the study of international relations at the University of Jember, also observes that debating Islamic law in the context of Pancasila brings back the discussion to the substantive understandings of Islam held by Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid and Syafii Maarif, as well as non-Indonesian intellectuals such as the Sudanese jurist Abdullahi an-Na'im.<sup>103</sup> This brings the debate closer to the more principled discussions on the exact nature of shari'a, which are to some extent taking place in the legal sub-discipline of *usul al-fiqh* (foundations of jurisprudence), but especially in the discourse on *maqasid al-shari'a* (higher objectives of shari'a).

### *Substantivist interpretations of fiqh*

In a tribute to Nurcholish Madjid, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla acknowledged that the big epistemological and theological questions pertaining to the place of Islam in contemporary Indonesia have already been addressed by this pioneer of Islamic renewal thinking, as well as others like Harun Nasution and Abdurrahman Wahid. Subsequent generations—including his own—should concentrate on working out the concrete details of the issues which the Muslim community must confront in their present and future lives. This urgently requires a 'new foundation of jurisprudence (*ushul fiqh baru*)' that offers a framework for linking



legal thinking with other matters in modern social life.<sup>104</sup> Rather surprisingly, Abshar-Abdalla does not mention any contributions that have already been made by prominent figures from the NU, including his own teacher Sahal Mahfudh and Masdar F. Mas'udi, the former head of P3M.

Together with older scholars, such as Ibrahim Hosen and Ali Yafie, Mahfudh has helped to advance a contextualized interpretation of *fiqh*. The two former scholars contributed by stressing the importance of technical competence in *fiqh*, Regime but in doing so they carefully toed the party line under New Order in terms of the positions they took when contextualizing jurisprudence in relation to concrete issues. As the youngest of the three, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Mahfudh stayed on the political sidelines, but he became very much part of the reformed *pesantren* milieu where these discourses were actually developed and articulated. At the same time he 'remains deeply immersed in the Arabic tradition of Shāfi'i *fiqh* scholarship' and he has collaborated with Mustofa Bisri in the production of an Indonesian-language encyclopaedia on scholarly consensus or *ijma'*, drawing directly from these classical sources.<sup>105</sup> Insisting that these traditional materials must continue to be used and drawing attention to the plurality of interpretations found within the respective schools of law themselves, Mahfudh proposed that *fiqh* should be regarded as a methodological tool (*manhaj*) rather than a fixed normative approach. This also means that the traditional text materials used in the *pesantren*, the so-called *kitab kuning* or 'yellow books', are understood beyond the texts' significance as historicized documents.<sup>106</sup> As he explains in *Nuansa Fiqih Sosial* (*Nuances of Social Fiqh*), contextual perspectives must be teased out by means of critical but appreciative re-assessments of traditional scholarship:

[...] *fiqh* should not be thought of as 'a second closed body of scripture besides the Qur'ān,' but rather as a dynamic 'counter discourse' to the hegemonic thought structures of modernity that have come to frame dominant discourses on Islam along with most other issues in the Indonesian public sphere. In resistance to this, Mahfudh advocates a reconceptualization of *fiqh* itself as an interpretative methodology (*perangkat hermenutika*).<sup>107</sup>

In order to develop such a dynamic *fiqh*, combining intellectual sophistication with a concrete integration into the lived reality of Indonesia's Muslim community, Mahfudh attached central importance to the notion of the Public Good or *maslaha*—a concept that has not been elaborated extensively in the classical Shafi'i legal tradition. This

drew Madfudh to the writings of the late-fourteenth-century North African Maliki scholar al-Shatibi (d.1388), who is considered one of the greatest authorities on the subject of *maqasid al-shari'a* from the classical era.<sup>108</sup> In Mahfudh's reading, the notion of the Public Good gives *fiqh* a double role as a safeguard of orthodox truth and a tool for understanding social reality. According to Sahal Mahfudh this means that law has a function in *social control* and in *social engineering*.<sup>109</sup>

For many years Mahfudh had steered clear of politics, keeping the powers-that-be at arm's length, but in 1999 he did take over as the NU's general president and only a year later he also accepted the position of general chairman of MUI, when that post became vacant as a result of the resignation of his fellow NU scholar Ali Yafie following his earlier mentioned dispute with Abdurrahman Wahid. In this new capacity, Mahfudh has presided over the release of a series of fatwas that ruled negatively on inter-religious marriage, condemned the Ahmadiyya movement as heretical, and rejected the concepts of pluralism, liberalism and secularism as un-Islamic. These rulings received support from Muslim formalists but met with severe criticism by progressive-minded Muslims, many of whom had trained in the liberal atmosphere of the *pesantren* study circles Mahfudh had helped to create in the preceding thirty or forty years.<sup>110</sup>

Therefore, I think that Sahal Mahfudh, Ali Yafie and Ibrahim Hosen should be clearly distinguished from the other scholars discussed by Feener under the category 'new *ulama*'.<sup>111</sup> Aside from the generational gap—all three were born before independence—there are two additional reasons to set this old guard apart from younger figures in the NU's current top echelon, such as Said Aqil Siraj and Masdar Mas'udi. First of all, Yafie and Mahfudh never attended university, although Hosen eventually graduated from al-Azhar at the relatively advanced age of forty-three.<sup>112</sup> More important, however, is the earlier noted conservatism that characterizes the later years of Yafie and Mahfudh, which contrasts sharply not only with the ideas propounded by Abdurrahman Wahid, but also with the writings on *fiqh* by their younger peers.

Masdar F. Mas'udi: second-generation substantivist  
or Sunni traditionalist?

Masdar F. Mas'udi coordinated workshops during his directorship of P3M in which he too stressed the enduring value of the *Kitab Kuning*,

because of their dynamic and flexible potential for coping with contemporary issues.<sup>113</sup> He regarded them as a tool for learning to understand the 'internal diversity of classical Muslim jurisprudence' and develop a much needed 'appreciation for nuance'.<sup>114</sup> The grounding of *fiqh* in the authority of revelation again point to the NU's propagation of Islam as a 'Middle Way' rather than an invitation to extreme relativism. It reflects the emphasis on moderation, balance, tolerance and justice after the organization's reorientation towards the original *Khittah* 1926. This concern for justice also features prominently in another aspect of Mas'udi's work. Aside from an interest in the source material for religious epistemologies, he has also dealt with the more technical aspects of jurisprudence. Mas'udi's advocacy of a more coherent methodology based on an integral vision of human life challenges the atomistic approach found in the work of many other jurists. He dismisses the revival of *ijtihad* by early Muslim reformists as lacking in critical rigor and claims that their approach fits better in the technical juridical specialism of *tarjih*, which is concerned with selecting the right legal position on the basis of the strongest possible evidence.<sup>115</sup>

Such understanding of *ijtihad* also resonates with the NU's redefinition of *Aswaja* and with Ash Shiddieqy's re-evaluation of permanently fixed or categorical (*qat'i*) and changeable non-categorical (*zanni*) acts, as discussed above. In this interpretation, the notion of justice fits in the former category of non-negotiable immutability. In this holistic understanding of shari'a as an epistemological method, *ijtihad* functions as the interpretative tool for justice in the different contexts with which *fiqh* is concerned.<sup>116</sup> Applying this to concrete juridical questions, in his most important book, *Agama Keadilan* or *Religion of Justice*, Mas'udi draws a parallel between the ethical dimensions of the obligation of *zakat*, or mandatory charitable donations, and the abstract notion of economic justice.<sup>117</sup> Because this 'macro-conceptualization' of *zakat* as taxation belongs to the theological domain, Feener has a point in noting that from a professional jurist's point of view, *Religion of Justice* is not 'a technical work of *fiqh*'.<sup>118</sup> Instead, Mas'udi takes the preoccupation of jurists with the piecemeal fashioning of juridical rulings to the level of moral responsibility. He wants to offer a unified understanding of *zakat* and tax—which 'used to be understood in a dichotomous way'—by drawing a parallel with the complementarity of body and soul, in which the spirit of *zakat* is embodied in taxation.<sup>119</sup> He has applied this approach also to other

topics which caught his interest, such as gender equality and women's reproductive rights, on which he worked together with the leading female Muslim scholar and women's rights activist Lies Marcoes-Natsir (b.1959).<sup>120</sup>

In a contribution by Mas'udi to *Islam in Contention*, a book published by the Wahid Institute in the wake of the growing antagonism between different Muslim camps following the MUI Fatwa and subsequent 'Declaration of Indonesianness', he continues to draw on his legal philosophy of social justice to address the relationship between Islam and state. Extrapolating from his substantive rather than formalist take on shari'a, Mas'udi concludes that understanding the relation between Islam and state 'as one between two institutional powers is gravely misguided', because this kind of dualism reduces religion to a profane pseudo-ideology.<sup>121</sup> Repeating the point made in *Religion of Justice*, the connection between state and religion is best understood as a symbiotic relationship, comparable to that of 'soul and body, spirit and flesh, value and institution, or vision and action', with religion offering direction and the state providing the required structure for the translation and actualization of religiously-inspired imperatives.<sup>122</sup> Discovering how to infuse this spirit of justice and mercy into secularized state structures is a divine duty of all believers and a concrete task for religious specialists.

Positioning it within the wider redress of the secularization thesis which has been discussed in the previous chapter, Mas'udi argues that the Pancasila Doctrine offers a compromise between secularist rhetoric and theocentric conceptualizations of statehood, and that Indonesia is well advised to preserve it because it 'takes us out of such a simplistic black-and-white dichotomy'.<sup>123</sup> In terms of institutional structures, no religion can provide adequate guidance, because divine revelation deals with the absolute, whereas state formation must yield to the changing pressures of time and space. However, 'it is another matter if the concept of the "state" refers to moral and ethic principles as reference for its orientation'.<sup>124</sup> If that is the case then Islam has an interest and the competence to take a position, because in relation to human life its primary imperative is to provide justice. As the paramount principle for safeguarding human integrity and dignity—nowadays encapsulated in the human rights discourse—classical Islamic legal thinking ensured justice by upholding the five basic rights laid down in the higher objectives of shari'a: the preservation of life (*nafs*), intellect

(*‘aql*), religion (*din*), property (*mal*) and family or lineage (*‘ird wa nasl*). As noted in the previous chapter, in Mas‘udi’s view Islamic doctrine is maintained on three levels, and therefore also defending these fundamental rights falls first to the individual believer, then to family and society, and only in the last instance to the state.<sup>125</sup>

Pointing back to his standard work on *zakat* as a system of taxation, Mas‘udi explains that while, on the one hand, the state will incur expenditures in the execution of its duties towards its citizens, it is not designed to move into commercial activity to generate revenues. Instead, as a social and humanitarian institution, the state implements taxation on grounds of a public ethic, balancing the payments it receives against a need for redistribution of wealth to protect the weak and in order to serve the Public Good for the benefit of all citizens. At the same time, Mas‘udi notes that such teachings are not devoid of a meritocratic dimension, whereby human equality is acknowledged, but only those of the best quality—that is those who put in the right effort—will thrive and prosper. Instead of translating this in terms of neoliberal open-market policies, this Islamic variant on the principle of the ‘survival of the fittest’ is formulated ethically as those excelling in doing ‘good deeds’—a morality that sets Islam apart from capitalism.<sup>126</sup>

While agreeing that *Religion of Justice* constitutes Masdar Mas‘udi’s masterpiece, after unearthing its underlying epistemology along the lines of Foucault’s archaeology of intellectual genealogies, Ahmad Baso finds the book wanting in several respects and not living up to its claims of offering a social critique and empirical theology of dialectics. As an exponent of the new *ulama* discussed in an earlier chapter, Mas‘udi is considered a major contributor to the effort of taking Indonesia’s Islamic traditionalism beyond its textual preoccupations by transforming it into a *mazhab manhaji* or ‘methodological school’. Ahmad Baso asks whether Mas‘udi’s system of thought has actually managed to turn traditionalist theology and jurisprudence from a consumptive discipline into a creative way of thinking. In order to find an answer to this question, Baso traces Mas‘udi’s engagement with *Aswaja* as method rather a doctrinal school to his writings before *Religion of Justice*. On the basis of these readings he concludes that Mas‘udi has not succeeded in offering a real alternative to the two dominant ways of thinking about religion, represented by the orthodox paradigm, which remains locked in idealism and scripturalism, and the paradigm of realism found in Mu‘tazili thought and in Western

humanism.<sup>127</sup> Mas'udi presents his understanding of *ahl al-sunna*, consisting of respect for the Traditions of the Prophet, following the righteous path of the middle, and maintaining the unity and integrity of the *umma* or community, as the doctrinal, methodological and social references of systematic thinking along the lines of Kant's metaphysical, epistemological and practical philosophies. However, a close reading of these writings shows that instead of being systemic, Mas'udi's approach is doctrinal–normative and instrumental; lacking a unifying organic grounding in reason. It is driven by pragmatic or even utilitarian considerations of 'what is beneficial', which serve to justify the status quo, relativism, the secular, and collaboration with those in power.<sup>128</sup> Mas'udi has only demonstrated what Arkoun calls an ahistorical 'sublimation' of Sunni thinking, failing to move *Aswaja* beyond the Ash'ari-Maturidi theology, Shafi'i's *fiqh* and al-Ghazali's Sufism.<sup>129</sup>

Ahmad Baso contends that Ma'sudi is actually suspicious of reason. This is reflected in his use of terms such as 'counter-productive' and *invasi pemikiran asing* or 'invasion of foreign thinking'—which echoes the obsession of reactionary Muslims with *ghazwul fikr*. He also has a monolithic view of the Mu'tazili School, only seeing the association with the inquisition under Caliph al-Ma'mun, and without appreciation for their scripture-based exhortations to use reason. Never shying away from controversy, according to Ahmad Baso, Mas'udi's writings read 'almost like a Salafi discourse'.<sup>130</sup> He is not interested in deconstructive critiques in order to reconstruct Islamic thinking, but seems only concerned with consolidating Ash'ari doctrine. Also, when dealing with the Qur'an, Mas'udi's engagement with the difference between the so-called 'clear' (*muhkama*) and 'ambiguous' (*mutashabbiha*) verses, as representing 'absolute universal ideas' and 'technical–methodical applications' respectively, reflect an arbitrary linking between the symbolic domain and the realm of ideas, exhibiting a lack of familiarity with the findings of semiotics on the relationship between the signifier and the signified.<sup>131</sup> When it comes to interpretation, rather than engaging in critical text analysis, Mas'udi's hermeneutics puts its faith in intuition—not along the lines of Western philosophers such as Descartes or Kant, but in terms of the concept of *fitra* (the innate human disposition to believe) or the voice of inner illumination. These primordial qualities, free from the 'contaminations of history and power', also determine Mas'udi's interpretation of the universal idea or absolute principle of justice.<sup>132</sup> This ahistorical tradition of illuminationist knowledge com-

bined with mysticism forms not only the ontological but also the epistemological basis for a kind of intuitive Islam.<sup>133</sup>

Transposing this genealogy of Mas'udi to the core theme of his main work, *Religion of Justice*, Baso explains that the conflation of *zakat* with taxation reflects a misconstrued understanding of the relationship between religion and state; as a kind of 'social fitra' whereby justice as an attribute of God is turned into an aspect of human viceregency. According to Baso, this misunderstanding is a result of Mas'udi's ahistorical idealism, because historically *zakat* has never been identified with tax. As the research of Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri has shown, the economic system in classical Islamic societies was tributary, based on spoils of war and coercion. The 'romanticism' characterizing this quasi-mystical attempt to transpose universal principles to contemporary Muslim societies is also evinced by Mas'udi's utopian characterization of the state in terms of familial affiliation, 'the good state' and the 'primordial state'.<sup>134</sup> To Baso this clearly demonstrates an ignorance of Antonio Gramsci's theory of state hegemony or Louis Althusser's ideological apparatus.<sup>135</sup> Such blindspots lead to an uncritical legitimization of state hegemony. Consequently, *Religion of Justice* fails to establish an organic link with civil society. According to Baso, Masdar Mas'udi's intellectual independence is further compromised by his implication in the exercise of state control through his long-standing membership of ICMI. Mas'udi's identification of the state as 'the guarantor of the Public Good' reflects an étatist understanding of public interest that is shaped by his Sunni normativism.<sup>136</sup>

Also in terms of the philosophy of law this association is very problematic, because Mas'udi's understanding of *maslaha* is very different from that of classical scholars such as Najm al-Din al-Thufi (d.1316 CE), al-Shatibi or Ibn Rushd. His dual interest in *fiqh* and Sufism is also methodologically at odds with the challenges posed by Ibn Hazm, al-Shatibi and Ibn Rushd to the dominance of Shafi'i *qiyas* (reasoning by analogy), and the alternative inductive or demonstrative reasoning characterizing '*maqasidi*' legal thinking.<sup>137</sup> In the final analysis, Ahmad Baso says that Indonesia needs a social movement, not another instance of renewal thinking which has remained 'sporadic in nature [...] without any clear prospect', only to make common cause with the powers-that-be.<sup>138</sup> Lacking the 'spirit of rationality and historicity', Mas'udi's *Religion of Justice* stays on the level of doctrinal thinking, or what Baso calls—with a nod to Richard Rorty—a 'discourse of absence'.<sup>139</sup>

*Usul al-Fiqh as hermeneutics, Maqasid al-Shari'a as a philosophical method*

Although Sahal Mahfudh and Masdar F. Mas'udi make cursory references to the notion of *maqasid al-shari'a* or 'the higher objectives of shari'a' in Indonesia, it is Yudian Wahyudi who has made the most consistent argument for treating this sub-field of legal thinking as both an epistemological method and a legal doctrine. In his capacity as professor in the philosophy of law at the department for the comparative study of *fiqh* in UIN Yogyakarta's faculty of shari'a, he has made this a part of his sustained advocacy of turning *usul al-fiqh* into a hermeneutics that is philosophical in orientation rather than juridical.<sup>140</sup> Notwithstanding this shift in focus in terms of the purpose of legal thinking, it also points to the broader historical relevance of the study of law for hermeneutics: Affirming that—aside from the exegetes of sacred scriptures—jurists have played a crucial role in developing this discipline. Also, after it had become a fully recognized sub-field of philosophy, thanks to the efforts of Schleiermacher and Dilthey as well as later phenomenologists and existentialists, legal thinkers still retain a vivid interest in the subject.<sup>141</sup> This continuing symbiotic relationship between law and hermeneutics is evinced by the debate between Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) and the Italian historian of law Emilio Betti (1890–1968), and the more recent revival of legal hermeneutics by Thomas Seeböhm.<sup>142</sup>

In relation to the present discussion on Islamic law, but also in the wider context of the development of hermeneutics in the Muslim world, Wahyudi's interest in expanding the understanding of what is generally regarded as a field of technical legal competence into a philosophical discipline is very much influenced by his engagement with the work of the Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi.<sup>143</sup> Inspired by Muhammad Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, and by his introduction to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (as well as the writings of his students Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur) during his studies at the Sorbonne in the 1950s and 1960s, Hanafi used these newly gained insights to turn *usul al-fiqh* into a general method for philosophical inquiry.<sup>144</sup> This provided the foundation for Hanafi's so-called 'Heritage and Renewal' project, which turned into a life-long preoccupation with transforming other disciplines of traditional Islamic learning into similar new forms of



‘endogenous intellectual creativity’ relevant to the challenges faced by contemporary Muslims.<sup>145</sup>

As part of his own work on law and philosophy, Yudian Wahyudi highlights the centrality of *maqasid al-shari‘a* in linking legal, ethical and political thinking—emphasizing the importance of recognizing both its doctrinal and methodological aspects. These efforts must also be regarded as part of a wider trend towards a re-appreciation for classical thinking about *maqasid al-shari‘a*, which has recently become noticeable throughout the Muslim world. One of the highest-profile contributors to this emerging discourse is the Egyptian-born Jasser Auda (b.1966). With a background in computer sciences, Auda also received tutoring in the traditional Islamic sciences at al-Azhar, before retraining as a scholar of Islam in Britain, where he wrote a PhD dissertation on the higher objectives of shari‘a, which was subsequently published as *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.<sup>146</sup> Formerly with the Al-Furqan Foundation in London, where he was founding director of the Al-Maqasid Centre for Research in the Philosophy of Law, he later became Deputy Director of the Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE) in Qatar. Now he lectures worldwide on the subject of *maqasid al-shari‘a*, and his writings have been translated into sixteen languages.<sup>147</sup>

The doctrine of *maqasid al-shari‘a* was first articulated by eleventh-century scholar al-Juwaini (d.1085) and his student al-Ghazali, before receiving its most coherent elaboration by the earlier mentioned scholar al-Shatibi. It first reached progressive-minded Muslims in Indonesia through their reading of Muhammad Abduh and the early Rashid Rida. However, in Wahyudi’s opinion, none of these contemporary heirs have taken the subject beyond the doctrinal manifestations found in these classical and reformist sources.<sup>148</sup> Such reductionist understanding of the sub-field of *maqasid al-shari‘a* also robs the discipline of *usul al-fiqh* of its philosophical dimension, ‘cutting it off from its civilizational dynamics, as if *usul al-fiqh* is not at all connected with historical and social developments’.<sup>149</sup> Although the quality of thinking of IAIN graduates who went on to obtain doctorates in *usul al-fiqh* began showing signs of improvement as they became acquainted with the hermeneutical quartet consisting of Heidegger, Betti, Gadamer and Ricoeur, according to Yudian Wahyudi it still lacks in critical rigor and interpretative depth. Also the attention for *maqasid al-shari‘a* in the 1980s, found in the work of Fazlur Rahman and Khalid Masud’s discussion of

the writings of al-Shatibi, did not manage to move the discourse beyond a descriptive and doctrinal engagement, or mere repetition of maxims and slogans. Consequently, even by the end of the 1990s scholarship in *usul al-fiqh* still continued to adhere to the cautionary legal maxim that ‘the avoidance of damage takes precedence over obtaining benefit’ (*dar‘ al-mafasid muqaddam ‘ala jalb al-masalih*).<sup>150</sup>

By contrast, new theorists take a more proactive approach. Yudian Wahyudi regards the *maqasidi* or purpose-based approach as seeking to ‘realize, ensure and preserve the common good for humankind’, and in particular the Muslim community.<sup>151</sup> Building on the hierarchy developed in classical *maqasid al-shari‘a* theory, it posits a three-level scale of priorities which—although different—complement each other. The most important are the so-called *dharuriyyat*: primary objectives that must be realized, because failure to do so will result in the destruction of crucial aspects of what constitutes a full human life. These consist of the earlier mentioned preservation of religion, life, intellect, property and offspring—the most fundamental rights that need protection to maintain the integrity and dignity of human life. Next are the *hajiyyat* or secondary objectives; although not imperative to safeguard and sustain human life, their realization is necessary in order to ease, facilitate or complement the absolutely required *dharuriyyat*. On the third and lowest level are the *tahsiniyyat* or embellishments;<sup>152</sup> neither imperative nor necessary, their role in the realization of both the *dharuriyyat* and *hajiyyat* is a matter of aesthetics or etiquette. This last type of objectives offers a vindication of cultural diversity in the manifestations or ways of expression of religious practice, thus also demonstrating that ‘Muslim religiosity does not mean the extinction of creativity’.<sup>153</sup>

Paralleling these three levels of the purposes of shari‘a is the doctrine of the ‘unity of knowledge’ which, if disrupted by privileging one over the other, will lead to a disintegration of human life. According to Wahyudi, this parallel only serves to demonstrate and reinforce the potential of *usul al-fiqh*, but especially of *maqasid al-shari‘a*, to articulate the coherence of Islam in providing salvation and peace for the world by conceiving of its teachings as a process rather than a teleology.<sup>154</sup> Such a conceptualization of religion, in turn, will help transform what is generally regarded as doctrine into a method of thinking. Realizing that divine revelation finds its expression in three types of *ayat* or signs of God—different from each other but at the same time complementary—will also aid the appreciation of a slogan like ‘Return

to the Qur'an and the Sunna' as affirming the integrity of Islam's teachings instead of seeing it as a curse, in the sense of promoting dogmatism.<sup>155</sup> Whereas the *ayat quraniah*, or Qur'anic verses, function as signs of God's greatness, providing the doctrines of the oneness of God (*tawhid*), morality (*akhlaq*) and justice (*keadilan*), they are complemented by divine manifestations in the cosmos through the *ayat kauniyah* or ontological verses. Yudian Wahyudi stresses that *sunnatullah*, or God's determination of the laws of nature, 'hold the key to ensuring peace and tranquillity in the world'.<sup>156</sup> The reason for this is that these laws are the same for all humankind, regardless of their religion, and by acknowledging their regulatory power over the cosmos, submission (*islam*), faith (*iman*) and safety (*aman*) will coincide and thus guarantee peace and stability in worldly existence.<sup>157</sup> Finally, there are the rules regulating human life. These are expressed in the *ayat insan-iyah* or 'signs of humanity' in which Islam and faith again come together through the principle of complementarity to create a balance or social justice:

God has delegated this power to humankind as reflected by the *hadith* 'the will of God depends on the will of humankind'. This law is strengthened by *mutual agreement*. Especially in the past, social discord had to be resolved by the parties involved: as long as one of them has not yet forgiven [the transgression] then also God cannot yet forgive. Thus the *ayat insan-iyah* occupy a middle position: more definitive than *ayat Quraniyah* (because a vertical sin [transgression towards God, ck] can be easily forgiven by God), but more flexible in comparison to the *ayat kauniyah*, because a social transgression can be forgiven, but breaking a law of nature is usually unforgivable. [...] Thus Islam is *tauhid*, since it integrates God's will present in Scripture, the world and in humankind, offering liberation from theological, natural, and cosmic disaster.<sup>158</sup>

It is this realization that God is found on all these levels that constitutes *Islam kaffah* or 'complete Islam', which finds its human expression in *taqwa* or the 'God-consciousness' of humankind.<sup>159</sup>

What motivated the religious scholars to design a theory and method of interpretation is the fact that the text of Qur'an and Hadith are limited in a quantitative sense, whereas human civilization and—in terms of legal thinking—its concomitant casuistry continue to evolve. As a result of this need for developing the limited textual values in relation to a reality that is without such constraints, there has been a tendency on the theological level to sacralise such theories and methods, thus 'ensnaring the Muslim community in idolatry'. Ironically, Wahyudi

opines, this tension has led 'people to speak of religion in divine language, whereas God speaks to humankind in a human language'.<sup>160</sup> Consequently many Muslims, including scholars, schools of thought and religious organizations, have fallen victim to the atrophy of Islamic law. In order to escape from this quandary, as a method, *maqasid al-shari'a* must function as an anatomist's scalpel or as a refracting optical lens for analyzing the constantly changing factual situations by distinguishing between its primary, secondary and tertiary purposes. It also affirms the rule of complementarity, which is the main regulator of Islamic law, elucidating the principle that there can be no good without evil, or benefits without disadvantages, and the reverse. On the basis of this principle of complementarity governing both *maqasid al-shari'a* and the unity of knowledge, Wahyudi distinguishes five parties that are characteristic for Islamic law: it is at one and the same time divine (*ilahi*) and positive (*manusiaui*, man-made) or secular; absolute and relative in terms of values and their implementation in accordance with the circumstances respectively; universal and local; eternal and temporal; and literal and figurative or spiritual. On the basis of these characteristics it becomes understandable why Islamic law does not distinguish a simple binary between permitted (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*), but recognizes four levels of validity, ranging from *mandub* or *sunnat* (recommended), to *mubah* (permissible), *makruh* (disliked or to be avoided) and *haram* (forbidden). It was this scale of gradations that also inspired jurists to formulate the priorities that make up *maqasidi* or purpose-based thinking.<sup>161</sup>

Aside from being accommodative of the minutiae of jurisprudence, the scale also offers extrapolations which can be applied to more politicized issues, such as the tension between Islam and nationalism. By way of illustration, Wahyudi compares the decisions of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Mustafa Atatürk, as well as religious campaigners for independence in India, Morocco and Indonesia to let secularism and nationalist ideologies prevail over historicized Islamic concepts of statehood or over religious solidarity, on the grounds that the integrity and very survival of political entities fall within the category of *dharuriyyat*, whereas their specific form can often be relegated to the level of *tahsiniyyat*. As far as the safeguarding of Indonesia's territorial integrity and securing political solidarity among the various constituencies of the Indonesian population are concerned, the country's first vice president, Mohammad Hatta, used the metaphor that

the Jakarta Charter is no more than ‘lipstick’, while the first principle of Pancasila, the belief in One God, functions like ‘salt’—meaning that the latter falls within the domain of the *dharuriyyat*, whereas the former is no more than a non-essential embellishment (*tahsiniyyat*). In terms of balancing benefits and disadvantages, downplaying religiosity was the lesser evil, while stressing national unity would gross the largest benefit.<sup>162</sup>

Wahyudi’s brief political case studies demonstrate the potential of *usul al-fiqh* as a method of thinking, an epistemology that is Islamic in nature and thereby an example of endogenous intellectual creativity. It stresses the need for *usul al-fiqh* to function as a permanent dialectic between the divine text and human custom shaped by history and culture. From the perspective of *maqasid al-shari‘a*, interpretative exercises are in effect what Gadamer called a *Horizontverschmelzung* or ‘fusion of horizons’, whereby priorities are determined either top-down or bottom-up. This creates the relativity that allows *usul al-fiqh* to develop the *pluralitas tafsir* or ‘plurality of interpretations’ on the basis of this-worldly historicity.<sup>163</sup> As a scholar of the comparative study of *usul al-fiqh*, Wahyudi concludes that—in comparison to countries like Turkey, India, and Morocco—Indonesia has been more successful in striking a balance between nationhood and religiosity.

*Experimental compromise between formalism and substantivism: the Family Law Counter Draft*

Aside from exploring innovative answers to fundamental philosophical questions related to Islamic law, progressive Muslims are also engaged in hands-on and concrete legal groundwork. In 2004, a group of eleven Muslim intellectuals of mostly NU backgrounds, all having received secondary and tertiary education in Islamic studies from *pesantren* and IAINs, came together for an exercise in alternative legislation, perhaps not dissimilar to the practice of the Amicus Brief in European and American law. From an intellectual–historical point of view, it also offers an instance where the lines between the intellectual’s role as legislator or interpreter can no longer be drawn so clearly.

Key participants in this initiative included Marzuki Wahid and Ahmad Suaedy, who are both associated with the Wahid Institute, while individually also linked to Lakpesdam and LKiS respectively; Siti Musdah Mulia, one of Indonesia’s leading female religious scholars

working as a policy-maker at the Ministry of Religious Affairs; and JIL activist Abdul Moqsith Ghazali, who also lectures at Paramadina University. In 2003, they managed to get support from the Working Group for Gender Mainstreaming at the Ministry of Religious Affairs to challenge the transformation of the Islamic Law Compilation under Presidential Instruction 1/1991 (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam* or KHI-Inpres) into the Material Law Bill of Marriage Law for the Religious Court (RUU HTPA) by writing a Counter Legal Draft *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (CLD-KHI). The reasons for targeting this particular piece of legislation was that—aside from being ‘a replica of outdated *fiqh*’ in terms of methodology—KHI-Inpres also retains stipulations contradicting ‘the universal principles of Islam, such as equality (*al-musawah*), brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah*) and justice (*al-adalah*), and therefore ‘no longer accord with current legal regulations and ratified international conventions’.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, the CLD-KHI is not only driven by theological arguments, but also motivated by a specific set of socio-political factors. In addition, it must also be remembered that the KHI-Inpres is regarded as one of the most tangible and concrete outcomes of the achievements of figures like Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy and Hazairin in terms of working towards a *Fikih Indonesia* or *Madhhab Nasional*, thus giving the counter-proposal a strong symbolic value as well. This effect is further enhanced by timing the initiative during the promulgations of *perda syariat* in various Indonesian provinces.<sup>165</sup>

I suggest considering the CLD-KHI initiative as an attempt to find a compromise between the shari‘atization of Indonesia’s legal system driven by Islamic formalists and the hermeneutical discussions on *usul al-fiqh* and *maqasid al-shari‘a* by legal substantivists. On the one hand, it seeks to uphold what Marzuki Wahid calls ‘values of humanity’, including respect for women’s rights; while on the other, the committee’s discussions and alternative formulations are based on primary Islamic sources, namely the Qur’an and Hadith, alongside the consultation of the *kitab kuning*, and the application of *ijtihad* or independent reasoning.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, in producing the required set of documents the working team also collaborated with religious scholars, fellow academics and NGO activists. These included not only revised draft bills for marriage, inheritance and legal bequests, but also records of background discussions on *fiqh* methodology, and an academic paper on pluralist and democratic Islamic law compilation, outlining alternative *fiqh* standards designed to serve as a future ‘fundamental

## THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC LAW?

reference for a just society, which upholds values of humanity, respects women's rights, spreads wisdom and kindness, and achieves wellbeing for all of humankind'.<sup>167</sup>

Based on their investigations the team concludes that, while demands for the formalization of Islamic law do not necessarily contradict the Indonesian national legal system, it contains elements which can be considered as discriminatory towards non-Muslims, and thus in violation of human rights conventions. In the context of the newly emerging social and political order of the post-Suharto era, the authors of the CLD-KHI regard their document as the most effective response to the exclusivism characterizing Islamist agendas for the formalization of shari'a in terms of preserving Indonesian values regarding nationality and culture, supporting the democratization process, and upholding the international commitment to observe universal human rights standards. It points to the approaches encountered earlier in thinking about religion and statehood, as well as an appreciation of legislation as positive law:

With the KHI-Inpres as basis, the CLD-KHI team sought to alter the way of thinking about forming Islamic law, 'from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, from elitists to populist, from deductive to inductive, from *eisegese* to *exegese*'.<sup>168</sup>

Resonating with Yudian Wahyudi's caution against the tendency of jurists to converse in 'divine language' when discussing matters of Islamic law, the authors of the CLD-KHI opt for a comprehensive approach that takes an interest in safeguarding human felicity, local wisdom and public reasoning, as vouched for by the three-leveled purpose-based approach of *maqasid al-shari'a*.<sup>169</sup> The outcome accounts not only for a version of Islamic law that befits the Indonesian context; it should also render a form of public law acceptable to all, while placing 'democracy, equality and human rights in a very strategic position'.<sup>170</sup> In regard to the latter, the proposed changes enact important international agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as domestic laws dealing with human rights, child protection and domestic violence.

On account of KHO-Inpres being the most detailed regulation of religious matters at national state level, which is frequently used by judges of the religious courts, criticizing this piece of legislation is at

the center of CLDI-KHI activities. The team has proposed a set of amendments to the existing text of the law bill. The most important ones consist of opening up the possibility of inter-religious marriage; the abolition of polygamy; and the redefinition of marriage as a contract based on agreement between partners instead of a religious covenant, which effectively downgrades it from the category of *'ibadat* (acts of worship) to that of *mu'amalat* (human interaction). Others include abolishing the need for women older than twenty-one to be represented by a guardian; allowing women to act as marriage witnesses; raising women's marital age from sixteen to nineteen; the option for women to give a dowry, and creating equal roles, rights and responsibilities for both spouses, including the initiation of divorce. With regard to inheritance law, there can be no discrimination on grounds of religion or being of extramarital offspring in terms of the right to inherit, while the proportions allotted to sons and daughters should be equal.<sup>171</sup>

In the increasingly antagonistic atmosphere in which the debates between formalist and substantivist interpretations of Islamic law have been taking place in the past ten years or so, the CLD-KHI became so controversial that—in reaction to pressure exercised by both MUI and MMI—the Minister of Religious Affairs banned the proposal at the beginning of the fateful year of 2005. The evident polarization of Indonesia's Muslim community is also reflected in the responses to the counter draft emerging from different sides in the debate. They give a sense of *déjà vu* when considering earlier reactions to other instances where 'a version of Islamic thought that differs from general and established understandings is proposed', such as Harun Nasution's rational Islam, Nurcholish Madjid's version of the secularization thesis, Munawir Sjadzali's Reactualization Agenda, Masdar Mas'udi's *Religion of Justice*, and Abshar-Abdalla's advocacy of liberal Islam.<sup>172</sup> MUI rejected the draft on the grounds that it contained unlawful innovations (*bid'a*), alterations to the authenticity of Islamic law (*taghyir*) and manipulations of the text of the Qur'an. MUI Secretary General and Muhammadiyah Chairman Din Syamsuddin contended that the document contained 'some absurdities', while the deputy head of MUI's fatwa committee qualified the alternative bill as 'an evil law'.<sup>173</sup> MMI spokesman Fauzan al-Anshari and conservative NU executive Huzaemah Tahido Yanggo insisted that the amendments contradicted the core Islamic teachings and *maqasid al-shari'a*. Others used the



funding provided by the Asia Foundation to resort to the usual scare-mongering regarding *ghazwul fikri* and conspiracy theories involving Western agents. On the other side of the spectrum, a wide range of religious advocacy groups for gender equality, human rights and pluralism, including the Fahmina Institute, the NU's women's organization, the Wahid Institute, Lakpesdam, ICIP, ICRP, LKiS and JIL, expressed their appreciation for the initiative that could influence policy-makers or hailed it as a 'kind of ideal Islamic legal thinking'.<sup>174</sup> Public recognition came in the form of Siti Musdah Mulia's selection as *Tempo* magazine's personality of the year and an award bestowed by the United States government. Although Masdar Mas'udi disagrees with the ban on polygamy and expressed concern that a majority of the Muslim community would be highly critical of the CLD-KHI, he nevertheless praised the efforts of the working team. Also Muhammadiyah activist Moeslim Abdurrahman offered a dissenting opinion that challenged the view of Chairman Syamsuddin. He insisted that as a form of collective *ijtihad*, the alternative bill exercised *fiqh*'s historical role of bringing about social change. Finally, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla acknowledged that the proposal was radical by any Muslim standards, but—if accepted—it could revolutionise Islamic law.<sup>175</sup>

In a self-reflective assessment by one of the project's initiators, Marzuki Wahid noted that the opposition and controversy caused by the CLD-KHI could in part be attributed to the unusual perspective put forward by the working team. Instead of stressing specific Islamic values and relying primarily on the Qur'an and Hadith, the authors appealed to universal standards of human rights, gender equality, plurality and democracy; in spite of their universal pretensions, these concepts still carry strong connotations of Western thinking. Similarly, the reliance on American funding provoked Islamist periodicals, such as *Sabili* and *Hidayatullah*, to portray the initiative as a 'purveyor of the "ideologies" of liberalism and secularism'.<sup>176</sup> In the final instance, Marzuki Wahid identified four reasons why the CLD-KHI eventually did not manage to win over the government, parliament and majority of Muslims, and may in fact have 'worsened the relationship between liberal Islam and conservative Islam'.<sup>177</sup> Aside from operating under a far from unified Ministry of Religious Affairs, the team underestimated the influence of conservative elements in organizations such as MUI, and the sensitivities felt by the majority of Indonesia's Muslims regarding radical changes to highly emotional and closely personal issues

such as marriage. As a result, they had fallen short in developing a flexible and efficient strategy for lobbying policy-makers and influencing public opinion. However, in spite of its formal failure, the CLD-KHI proposal has become an important study resource, offering ample material for serious academic discussion.

### *A legal limbo?*

With the constitutional track closed off, proponents of the inclusion and implementation of Islamic law within Indonesia's legal and judicial system are using the opportunities provided by the devolution and decentralization of power from the central government to provincial and local authorities to introduce Islamic legalisation on a regional level. At the same time, the opponents of such exclusivist Islamic incursions into the legal realm have also found an alternative endogenous source for promoting Islamic values with a legal purport. Returning to the classical legacy of philosophical thinking about law, they regard the purpose-based approach of *maqasid al-shari'a* as a useful resource for shifting the focus onto the ethos that underpins the technical disciplines of *usul al-fiqh* and jurisprudence itself, as well as integrating universal human rights standards into Islamic legal thinking. The uncertainties surrounding what is in effect a choice between following the letter or spirit of the law were exacerbated by a government that failed to point out a clear direction. Meanwhile, disagreements over the interpretation of the Islamic heritage between interlocutors in these legal debates also carry over into other areas, with plurality, and especially the right to freedom of religion, becoming the most fiercely contested issue.

## CONTENTIOUS TRIANGULATION

### RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Fatwa 7, which condemned the notions of pluralism, liberalism and secularism as un-Islamic, was only one of several passed by MUI in the summer of 2005. In Fatwa 3, the council expressed reservations against the practice of collective inter-religious prayers, while Fatwa 11 calls on the government to close all places of worship of the Ahmadis and to prohibit the movement from disseminating its teachings.<sup>1</sup> These rulings turned pluralism and religious toleration into the key battleground between supporters and opponents of the positions held by MUI. Hints of this gravitation are detectable in the stress put on the issue of religious pluralism by both sides in the dispute. The official text of Fatwa 7 prioritizes pluralism in the sequence of contentious terms, whereas in discussions secularism usually comes first, because liberalism and pluralism are considered as derivatives that flow forth from the former. Meanwhile, critics of the fatwas banded together in the ‘Civil Society Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Conviction’, eventually expanding into a broad-spectrum coalition appealing to the Pancasila Doctrine in order to undergird the call for acceptance and acknowledgement of all religious beliefs and practices so as to reflect the plurality of Indonesian society.

The re-affirmation and support for the state’s foundational doctrine can indeed be used to fend off assaults on the country’s territorial and

institutional integrity as well as to prevent the undue privileging of one particular religion over others. What needs to be investigated further is to what extent its first principle of a belief in one God is indeed interpreted in a sufficiently expansive and inclusive way to accommodate religious and spiritual traditions which have gone hitherto without official recognition and—just as important—also to tolerate ‘sects’ and other offshoots from formally recognized religions or to accept atheists. Even before the issue of religious toleration erupted in full force within the Muslim community, the precarious position of minority groups within religious traditions had become an issue of concern since 2003, when a ‘Bill of Religious Harmony’ was put forward, which intended to forbid the public airing of religious interpretations that are considered to deviate from mainstream practice and understanding (without detailing what constitutes a ‘mainstream’). At the time, a future rector of UIN Jakarta, Komaruddin Hidayat, and JIMM founder Zuly Qodir were among the first progressive Muslim intellectuals to speak out against such restrictive stipulations, arguing that they form not just an unacceptable curtailment of citizens’ rights and freedom; they also blur the differentiation between state and religion.<sup>2</sup>

The recurrence and increasing frequency of outbursts of religious intolerance in the course of the ensuing decade is a sign that this is not just an issue of semantics, but is turning into real social conflict spilling out into city streets and rural kampongs. In June 2008, vigilantes physically attacked a peaceful gathering of the National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief (AKKBB), expressing support for Indonesia’s persecuted Ahmadiyya Movement at the National Monument (Monas) in Jakarta.<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere in the country the building of churches was blocked, book launches disrupted, and lynch mobs turned on Ahmadis and Shi‘ites. The ambivalent policies of the SBY government did very little to resolve these tensions which tear at the seams of Indonesia’s social fabric. Apart from the uncertainties characterizing the aftermath of regime change and the transition from autocracy to a democratic form of governance, history offers a partial explanation for the still relatively sporadic and isolated instances of religious violence. Finally, the debates on religious pluralism are also closely tied up with generic discussions on universal human rights standards regarding the freedom of religion, thought and expression, and the ways in which religion is taught, studied and researched in Indonesia. Aside from intersecting with religious pluralism, human rights

and religious education also form the prime interface with the notion of liberalism.

*Contextualizing religious tensions*

The historical context of the sensitivities surrounding religious pluralism can be traced back to at least the late colonial period when Indonesia was still under Dutch rule. Around the time of the First World War, Muslim assertiveness started to grow when intellectuals began stressing their Islamic identity in the face of a number of external influences, including a rise in Christian missionary activity, the arrival of movements such as the Ahmadiyya from South Asia, and the influx of alternative spiritual organizations like the Theosophical Society.<sup>4</sup> Such external influences did not cease with the end of colonialism; independent Indonesia also witnessed episodes of Muslim concerns and fears over recurring waves of Christianization in the 1950s and again in the 1960s-1970s, as well as what Hefner calls the influence of ‘non-standard Islams’.<sup>5</sup> From the republic’s inception in 1945 onwards, postcolonial governments continuously manipulated the latter’s centrifugal instability, and at the same time tried to control the centripetal forces associated with the other Islam; ‘organized as a more standardized, textual, and deterritorialized form of “religion” (*agama*)’.<sup>6</sup> The proponents of this re-centered Islam pitch themselves not just against Christianity, but also other religious traditions and practices such as *abangan*, which are dismissed as *aliran kepercayaan* or *kebatinan*—‘contemporary mystical beliefs’.<sup>7</sup> However, instead of seeing it as a syncretic amalgam, Hefner insists that *abangan* is more accurately understood as an exponent of these non-standard Islams. Its practitioners see themselves as Javanese Muslims embracing a ‘decentered and generative tradition of knowledge’.<sup>8</sup> From the early twentieth century onwards, they have been the subject of marginalization and manipulation by both colonial and independent Indonesian regimes through the combined effects of an expanding Islamic schooling system and post-colonial policies of national religionization.<sup>9</sup>

During the first two decades of its rule, the New Order Regime gave preferential treatment to the Christian minority and Javanese *abangan* when it came to occupying important government offices and other positions of political influence, including the armed forces and the financial sector. Muslim sentiments were further aggravated as they saw busi-

nesses run by Indonesians of Chinese descent or with Christian backgrounds prosper under New Order, as the government relied heavily on them for its economic policies, in particular in driving the development of the private sector. This way, Christians and Chinese were disproportionately well represented in trade, finance, economic advisory teams, the top of the military apparatus, and in security think tanks, answering to either Suharto personally or one of his trusted generals.<sup>10</sup>

Besides marginalizing actual exponents of political Islam, in its early years, the Suharto government also made a concerted effort to neutralize any general Islamic overtones in the political domain and to reduce Islamic cultural influences by giving autonomy to the *abangan* religious variant. This meant that the Muslim intelligentsia were curtailed by the government's repression of Islamic activism. Over the years, growing numbers of Muslim graduates from secular and Islamic institutions of higher education joined their intellectual predecessors from preceding generations, looking for opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills, as well as to implement their own visions for Indonesia's future and what its society should look like. Coinciding with Mukti Ali's term in office as Minister of Religious Affairs, this period also witnessed the first initiatives for inter-religious dialogue and an overhaul of curriculum in the state Islamic education system in order to ease the integration of a Muslim intelligentsia into the New Order's development efforts.<sup>11</sup>

According to Yudi Latif, what he calls the 'Sanskritization' of political and intellectual discourse built on the glorification of Java's classical Hindu past and the short-lived acceptance of Javanese spiritual practices as a separate religious orientation alongside the six religions sanctioned in the Pancasila.<sup>12</sup> Administrative leverage was further extended by appointing independent Muslim intellectuals, such as Mukti Ali, or retired military officials, such as Alamsjah Ratoe Perwiranegara, to the post of Minister of Religious Affairs, instead of senior religious scholars affiliated with either the NU or the Muhammadiyah. Bypassing the Ministry of Religious Affairs altogether, in 1973 there was even an eventually aborted attempt to secularize family law by Suharto's chief security adviser, Ali Murtopo, and his think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).<sup>13</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, this was the straw that nearly broke the camel's back and—in order to appease the angry reactions from across the Muslim camp—the government diffused tensions by establishing MUI. As part of the New Order's continuing ideologi-

cal indoctrination campaign, the promulgation of directives 44/1978 and 70/1978 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and *Kopkamtib* Decree 151/1978 ensured that all religious propaganda material, sermons and lectures were cleansed of any openly political contents.<sup>14</sup>

Although it heralded a major change in the regime's politics of allegiance, the building of the New Order's Islamic credentials through the Reactualization Agenda initiated in the 1980s by Religious Affairs Minister Munawir Sjadzali, and President Suharto's personal display of Muslim piety from the early 1990s onwards, could not prevent the eruption of religious and ethnic violence during the final years of its rule. The 1996 clashes between Muslims, Christians and ethnic Chinese in Situbondo not only damaged the regime's reputation, but also undermined the prestige of the then NU leader, Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>15</sup> After a brief lull during the early *Reformasi* years, the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has not helped the situation by giving mixed signals and displaying an evident lack of direction in its policies vis-à-vis religion. Without effective protection from law enforcement or legal retribution by the judiciary, violent attacks on religious minorities continue to go unchallenged. Meanwhile, regional and local authorities are issuing worrying statements that a ban on church building and the expulsion of what they characterize as 'deviant sects' would solve the unrest in their constituencies.<sup>16</sup> On the central level, the president gave lip service to religious pluralism while simultaneously tabling a proposal at the UN for an international protocol prohibiting blasphemy.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, when the US-based Appeal of Conscience Foundation (ACF) bestowed its World Statesman Award for religious tolerance on the Indonesian head of state, religious leaders and high-profile participants in interfaith dialogues, including the Catholic priest and philosopher Franz Magnis-Suseno and former Muhammadiyah leader Ahmad Syafii Maarif, lodged a formal protest.<sup>18</sup> Political uncertainty and ambiguous posturing aside, it is also important to recognize the divergent readings put forward by Muslim advocates of sufficiently broad interpretations of pluralism that can accommodate the toleration of both non-Muslims and minority groups within Indonesian Islam.

## *Exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists*

Despite the acrimonious tone of the debate on pluralism and religious tolerance between progressive and reactionary Muslims, there is

remarkable conceptual and terminological consistency among the various interlocutors on opposite sides of this divide. There appears to be general agreement on the distinction between exclusivists claiming finality for their own religious tradition and its adherents; inclusivists who privilege their own tradition but simultaneously recognize that it can work through other faiths; and pluralists insisting that all religious traditions are equally valid in pointing to the same ultimate truth and leading to the salvation of humankind. Obviously, there are differences of opinion between opponents and proponents over the desirability of this conceptual breakdown, as well as variations in the ways in which pluralism is understood and applied by its advocates. Nevertheless, this shared taxonomy warrants a closer look at the unfolding of these debates, because it will help to gain an understanding of how the Muslim discourse on religious tolerance and freedom of thought developed in Indonesia. This, in turn, will enable a better assessment of the nature of religiously-inspired tensions and conflicts that are currently affecting Indonesian society.

The initial tone of the present pluralism discourse was set by Nurcholish Madjid, who is generally acknowledged as its chief articulator by both his peers in the Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking of the 1970s, and younger generations who continue to draw on his ideas.<sup>19</sup> As one of Madjid's closest associates at the Paramadina Foundation, Budhy Munawar-Rachman has written two books on the subject: *Pluralist Islam*, published in 2001, sketches the contours of this discursive formation at the end of the twentieth century; the other, *An Islamic Argument for Pluralism*—the third volume in his 2010 trilogy, entitled *The Reorientation of Islamic Renewal*—takes the narrative into the new millennium, paying special attention to the impact of Fatwa 7.

Munawar-Rachman traces the emergence of a theory of religious pluralism to what he sees as the paradigmatic distinction between exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist (or parallel) attitudes towards religion.<sup>20</sup> Alternatively also referred as a theology of religions, it was developed in the second half of the twentieth century by Christian theologians and has since become an integral part of Christian renewal thinking. Contributions by Catholic theologians Karl Rahner, Raimon Pannikar and Paul Knitter, and by Protestant philosophers and historians of religion such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith and John Hick, were critical to that process. Writing in the immediate post-Vatican II period, Rahner's concept of the 'anonymous Christian' qualifies him



as an inclusivist, because it suggests that the grace of Jesus Christ can also work through other religious traditions. Living and working on the interstices of the Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist and secular worlds, the Spanish-Indian cleric Pannikar reflected on the implications of pluralism for religious truth claims and on its potential for mutual spiritual enrichment. The lessons to be learned from that also resonate with Indonesia's cultural and religious complexity. The contributions of Hick and Cantwell Smith were instrumental in developing a pluralist attitude which unequivocally rejects the absolute truth claims of religious exclusivists, promoting instead an approach of other religions with the same degree of respect as accorded to one's own faith, with the intention of trying to understand the other tradition from the inside. However, the most rigorous theorist of religious pluralism is Paul Knitter, who takes the effort one stage further. He argues that true inter-religious dialogue is only possible by giving up 'soteriocentric' claims that salvation comes through a particular deity or church, and by refraining from 'absolutist language'—characterized by such terms as superior, final or total. Currently holding the Paul Tillich Chair in Theology, World Religion and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he is an emphatic promoter of 'correlational theology', dismissing as reductionist those understandings of pluralism which take all religions as basically the same. Instead, Knitter suggests a notion of 'rough parity' that respects difference, which—in his view—is the only responsible and morally correct attitude towards religion in a global age.<sup>21</sup>

Although originating from Christian theology, Budhy Munawar-Rachman accepts that this pluralist theology of religions is having a worldwide relevance, and that also encompasses Indonesia and its majority Muslim population. Present-day pluralism has three characteristics which must also form the analytical basis for contemporary Muslims when they study Islamic theology and history. First of all, it implies an active social involvement in developing a shared civilization that accommodates diversity and difference; offering—in the words of Nurcholish Madjid—'genuine engagement of diversities within the bounds of civility'.<sup>22</sup> It also supposes an attitude of active acceptance and engagement with others along the lines of Michael Walzer's *On Tolerance*. Finally, the full acknowledgement of the values of other faith communities also means that pluralism is not the same as relativism, because the latter implies the absence or even a denial of any general

standard or fundamental values. Closely connected with this last point is the equally erroneous equation of pluralism with syncretism, which the Catholic cleric Franz Magnis-Suseno and UIN Professor Munir Mul Khan have been at pains to explain in their frequent participation in interfaith dialogues.<sup>23</sup> Instead there is the recognition of a basic set of values constituting a common platform shared by different religious traditions. In the Islamic context this notion of pluralism is expressed through the Qur'anic notion of the community of Abraham (*milla Ibrahim*), and the subsequent conceptualization of *Ahl al-Kitab*, or 'Peoples of the Book', who were accorded *Dhimma* status which offered protected status to—initially—only Jews and Christians on condition of payment of a special tax. This institution was instrumental to the emergence of a cosmopolitan Muslim culture and civilization.<sup>24</sup>

In Budhy Munawar-Rachman's own reading, 'the inclusivist view, in all its openness, becomes the foundation for true pluralism. And, the other way around, a truly pluralist view can only arise on the basis of such an inclusivist attitude'.<sup>25</sup> For all intents and purposes, this ambiguous conflation of inclusiveness and pluralism continues to color the Indonesian Muslim discourse on religious diversity, notwithstanding the fact that various progressive Muslim intellectuals are dissatisfied with this conflation. Nurcholish Madjid's fellow Renewal Movement member Dawam Rahardjo has pointed out that it is exactly this kind of ambiguity which mars MUI's interpretation of pluralism in Fatwa 7.<sup>26</sup> He is joined by others who also subscribe unreservedly to pluralism as a 'hard fact', and which in Indonesia has found its sublimation in the Pancasila Doctrine, giving the country a means to avoid outright inter-communal conflict or the domination of one religion over the others.<sup>27</sup> However, in view of what has transpired in Indonesia since 2005, these guarantees do not seem to be too assuring.

### *From interfaith theology to interfaith fiqh*

In 2006, the International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP) in Jakarta released a book titled *Interfaith Theology: Responses of Progressive Indonesian Muslims*. The publication was the outcome of a cross-generational conversation between Nurcholish Madjid, Masdar F. Mas'udi, Komaruddin Hidayat, Budhy Munawar-Rachman, Zuhairi Misrawi and a number of other intellectuals from the progressive camp. Closer inspection of the volume reveals that it was, in fact, the

English version of an Indonesian publication titled *Fiqih Lintas Agama*, literally meaning ‘interfaith *fiqh*’, which had appeared in 2004.<sup>28</sup> The difference between the titles of the Indonesian original and English translation is less deceptive than it might initially seem, since the contributors to the project agreed that:

Pluralistic theology is very much needed in order to create and maintain basic interfaith harmony. But pluralistic theology in this sense is a theoretical theology, and because of this, requires a practical theology which comprises guidelines for implementing it in concrete interfaith situations. This practical theology is the operational manual of theoretical theology. Theological pluralism in Islam, because its characteristic is theoretical and speculative, can be categorised as a scientific discipline which is called “*ilm al-kalam*” (scholastic theology). Practical theology in Islam, because its characteristic is practical, can be categorised as a scientific discipline called “*ilm al-fiqh*” (the science of Islamic jurisprudence).<sup>29</sup>

While the Indonesian version was published in 2004, so before the release of the fatwa, the subsequent condemnation of religious pluralism by MUI has not resulted in a revised or more forceful argumentation in the English translation. Instead, even in the face of this conservative and reactionary challenge, the positions taken in *Interfaith Theology* still reflect the late Nurcholish Majdid’s ambivalent mix of pluralism and inclusivism. Even after the death of Nurcholish Majdid shortly after MUI released the fatwa, the custodians of his intellectual legacy appear to perpetuate that ambiguity. Still Budhy Munawar-Rachman insists that *Interfaith Fiqh/Theology* is a crucial response by progressive Muslim intellectuals to MUI’s position on pluralism. That is also the reason why the book was subsequently challenged by reactionaries such as Adian Husaini, who accuse the authors of undermining the integrity of Muslim society.<sup>30</sup>

The participants in the dialogue feel that the exercise undertaken in *Interfaith Theology/Fiqh* was needed because ‘the old, exclusive *fiqh* is incapable of providing answers to current religious problems in interfaith relations’.<sup>31</sup> Regardless of whether indeed it offers a panacea for the crisis which religious pluralism is facing in Indonesia, the book provided yet another instance of the central place occupied by *fiqh* in the Islamic tradition. It argued not just for a transformation of Islamic jurisprudential thinking into a more flexible episteme capable of accommodating religious diversity and plurality, but—because of its importance to Muslim intellectualism—the varied backgrounds of the interlocutors also underscored that the field is too vital to be left as the exclusive

domain of ulama. However, before reformulating their more pluralist alternative, the participants in the ICIP project agreed that such an undertaking ‘requires a foundation of faith that reflects the total dimension of our faith. The birth of inclusivist and pluralist *fiqh* is a consequence of inclusive and pluralist theology’.<sup>32</sup> Only then can the position of *fiqh* be queried regarding minority and citizen rights in general, and—more to the point in the face of growing religious tensions—possible responses to ‘violence enacted in the name of religion’.<sup>33</sup>

A perusal of these theological deliberations clearly reveals the signature of Nurcholish Madjid and the enduring influence of his ideas. *Interfaith Fiqh/Theology* claims to be based on the premise of a pluralist theology of religions, which states that all religious traditions share a common set of core values. This is immediately backed up with a *hadith* according to which Muhammad said that ‘all prophets have one father and a different mother’, implying that their missions are in essence the same, even though God determined a ‘different *shir‘a* (path) and *minhaj* (method) for each community group’.<sup>34</sup> The inclusiveness required to root out sectarianism and replace it with what the discussants call ‘communalism’ draws on Nurcholish Madjid’s concentration on Islamic concepts such as *fitra*, the innate human inclination to believe in one God which is expressed through *taqwa*, or God-consciousness. Both the disposition and its manifestation can be traced back to the figure of Abraham as the ‘primordial monotheist’—in the Qur’an referred to by the designation *hanif*.<sup>35</sup> In the Islamic context, the religion of Abraham is restored through Muhammad as the final Prophet who calls humankind to Islam, or the submission to God. In response to pre-existing religions emerging from that Abrahamic narrative, revelation introduced the notion of the ‘common word’ or *kalimatun sawa*, which can be said to provide a shared platform for re-establishing what Nurcholish Madjid called *al-hanafiyya al-samha*—the broad inclusiveness of the original religious pact between God and humankind.<sup>36</sup>

This covenant is grounded in submission to God as the basic teaching shared by all religions—or ‘islam’ (with an undercase ‘i’) in a generic sense rather than a reference to the specific historical religious tradition which finds its origins in the revelations brought by Muhammad (Islam with a capital ‘I’). The creed resulting from that particular historical mission, ‘That there is no God but God’, sets in motion the final stage of a liberation process for all humanity. Here too the discussants follow Nurcholish Madjid’s religious anthropology.

Although recognized as the most problematic of all creatures in the universe, humans have yet been entrusted with God's viceregency on earth (*khilafa Allah fi'l-ard*).<sup>37</sup> They are charged with that responsibility and are held accountable because of their ability to understand their environment through the faculty of reason and respond to it in a creative fashion.

The concomitant ontology and epistemology, converging in the relativity of both human existence and knowledge in contrast to the absoluteness of God's omnipresence and omniscience, are also informed by Nurcholish Madjid's distinction between the horizontal and vertical dimensions affecting the human condition—represented by this-worldly existence among fellow humans and the individual believer's bond with God projected towards the Hereafter.<sup>38</sup> The propadeutic theological discussion ends by presenting the concept of the 'Peoples of the Book', or *Ahl al-Kitab*, as a concrete historical manifestation of Muslim acceptance of the Qur'anic notion of the 'Common Word'. The contributing intellectuals emphasize the lasting importance of this concept for 'the advancement of Islamic culture and civilization'.<sup>39</sup> As an example, they point to the vibrant culture shaped by Muslims, Jews and Christians in Muslim Spain (*Al-Andalus*) evidently introduced as an encouragement to other multi-ethnic and religious societies, such as Indonesia, to aspire to emulating the medieval Iberian example of *convivencia*.<sup>40</sup> Concrete historical experiences also invite the question as to whether recognition of *Ahl al-Kitab* can be extended to other religions which the Muslim community only encountered after the time of the Prophet and the end of the revelatory period. From then on, scripture no longer offers any clear answers, thus forcing Muslims to turn to *ijtihad* or interpretation, the practice that is at the center of *fiqh* as an open-ended discipline of Islamic learning from which to extrapolate solutions for new questions and problems as and when they occur.

When dealing with the substance rather than the symbolism of interfaith cooperation in the Indonesian context, the issue of inter-religious marriage has become one of the prime matters of concern. However, instead of acting as legislators engaged in writing an alternative draft law along the lines of the CLD-KHI project discussed in the previous chapter, the participants in this interfaith *fiqh* initiative have settled for the role of interpreters who focus on assessing the state of affairs in this particular field of Islamic learning.<sup>41</sup> Their concerns resemble Yudian Wahyudi's project of creating a solid epistemological founda-

tion for both Islamic legal and philosophical thinking, by engaging in a hermeneutical rereading of *ulum al-fiqh* through the lens of the underlying *maqasid al-shari'a*. To this end the author collective of *Interfaith Fiqh/Theology* have produced an inventory of shortcomings of current *fiqh* practice.

Unfortunately, all too often the study of *fiqh* is restricted to the uncritical rereading of classical texts written down by scholars centuries ago, which has resulted in a legal practice that is limited to the routine reproduction of antiquated jurisprudence. According to the authors' investigations, among the most serious historical shortcomings of *fiqh* is the way it has dealt with issues pertaining to non-Muslims. From their investigations they conclude that *fiqh*'s originally universal ambitions and early flexibility have been replaced by suspicion and intolerance. Again Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri's *Critique of Arab Reason* is invoked, in which he traces that tendency all the way back to the Era of Codification when religious scholars constructed a practice of jurisprudence designed to ensure obedience and loyalty to a particular school of Islamic law. This led to the establishment of what al-Jabiri called a *hadara al-fiqh* or 'culture of *fiqh*', lifting the discipline from functioning as a supportive hermeneutics to being the master narrative, or even meta-discourse, shaping Muslim religious identity and determining human felicity.<sup>42</sup> Other *turath* thinkers and proponents of discourse critique and text analysis, such as Mohammed Arkoun and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, are also recognized for contributing to the identification of this 'trap of authoritarianism', as a result of which *fiqh* has become bogged down in 'a quagmire of fatalism'.<sup>43</sup> This last qualification points to hegemonic accounts of a supposedly Golden Islamic Age. It is intended to challenge reactionary slogans such as 'Islam is the solution' (*Islam huwa al-hall*), which 'have shaped cognitive reasoning to accept everything labelled "Islam" without reserve, without criticism and without interpretation'.<sup>44</sup> Mohammed Arkoun's twin notions of the 'unthought and unthinkable' and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's 'ontology of texts' cast doubt on this rosy image of the Islamic past and highlight the problematic nature of classical *fiqh*'s theocentric outlook. Instead of playing a part in the negotiations between holy texts and reality, *fiqh* has developed into an exclusivist discourse, or what Arkoun calls a self-referential Closed Corpus.

The authors of *Interfaith Theology/Fiqh* adopt a comparable critical vocabulary and idiom; arguing that 'the stiffness and rigidity of doctrine' or the 'extraordinary impasse, stagnancy, and obstruction' char-

acterizing *fiqh* and exegesis produce a 'religious truth [which] is not the sort of truth that frees mankind from its shackles'.<sup>45</sup> On the contrary, this text-based epistemology turns both theology and jurisprudence into a 'vehicle of authority which closes creative thinking', making it incapable of coping with pluralism, inclusivity or dialogue, and therefore forcing pious Muslims into a dichotomous position over and against 'the Others' as unbelievers.<sup>46</sup> When this collective memory of broken history is transposed into the context of the Indonesian republic, the authors are of the opinion that this binary view is also responsible for attempts to revive the Jakarta Charta or introduce *perda syaria*t, as part of persistent campaigns aimed at the overall shari'atization of Indonesian society and the utopian ambitions of organizations such as HTI to restore the historical Caliphate.<sup>47</sup> What Indonesia—and the rest of the Muslim world—really need is an in-depth critique of *fiqh* as 'an untouchable discipline; challenging its protected status and stripping it of its sacred halo, while restoring its original meaning as understanding'. This is the only way to recapture the *ijtihadi* process of independent reasoning and dialectic between doctrine and reality which is needed for a dynamic reconciliation between text and context.<sup>48</sup>

For this reason the writers offer a set of suggestions to transform the discipline in a way that makes it more responsive to the concerns of present-day Indonesians. This involves a foregrounding of the ethical principles related to notions of religious tolerance and justice which they feel also underlie actual *fiqh* practice, rather than concentrating on the technicalities surrounding its conventional casuistry. The authors regard the progress made by contemporary religious scholars highlighting the values and social ethics of shari'a as 'a colossal step forward'.<sup>49</sup> They also appear to agree with Yudian Wahyudi that Islamic thinking needs a 'surgeon's scalpel' as the methodological tool for cutting the Islamic heritage free from the obstacles that are now impeding an effective engagement with generic humanitarian problems.<sup>50</sup> The purpose-based approach to *fiqh* pursued by *maqasid al-shari'a* is capable of distinguishing between the universalist pretensions of shari'a as a religious discourse and the truly universal values applicable to humankind needed to differentiate between the historical evolution of *fiqh* and the contemporary context. A progressive reinterpretation of *fiqh* must therefore:

shift from a theocentric *fiqh* towards an anthropologic-centric *fiqh*, that is a *fiqh* which avoids useless debate witnessed in the *fiqh* debate of the main

religious *madzhab*. An anthropologic-centric *fiqh* activates (brings to life) the truth of *fiqh* in a comprehensive way as voiced by the Mu'tazila School in the concept of *al-'adl wa al-tawhid* (justice and unity), that what ought to be emphasised is the justice and Unity of God.<sup>51</sup>

Thus interfaith *fiqh* challenges the assumption that the old ways are always truthful and that the new inevitably lead to apostasy.<sup>52</sup> It rests on the two foundational maxims or axioms of Islamic thinking which define the focus of *maqasid al-shari'a* on public interest (*maslaha*): 'taking what is beneficial while avoiding what is harmful' and 'keeping from the old what is good, while taking from the new what is better'. Interfaith *fiqh* outlines a three-stage reformation addressing the methodological, ethical and philosophical levels of legal thinking about religious pluralism. This corresponds to a process of contextualized rereadings of texts while respecting the discipline's established distinction between the principles (*usul*) and applications (*furu'*); the privileging of *al-kulliyat al-khamsa*, or five basic rights, over the simplistic binary of what is forbidden versus what is permitted; and, finally, the inculcation of Islamic legal thinking with modern social theory.<sup>53</sup>

An instance of explicit support for religious pluralism is found in the participants' appreciation of earlier historical contributions to the creation of a 'fiqh that is sensitive to pluralism', and efforts by contemporary intellectuals to revive these attempts.<sup>54</sup> The volume's contributors refer to the earlier mentioned Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi and Ibn Rushd, whose ideas the Egyptian philosopher Hasan Hanafi has translated or rather—as he calls it—'transposed' and 'transmuted' into an 'emancipatory functional hermeneutics' for which *usul al-fiqh* still offers the most promising model.<sup>55</sup> Also the writings of the Sudanese legal scholar and theorist of Islamic human rights Abdullahi an-Na'im, and his intellectual mentor Mahmud Muhammad Taha (1909–85), are important for such a project. Their conceptualization of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on a radical rereading of the Qur'an, which is diametrically opposed to conventional Muslim understandings of its historicity. Instead of relying on the Medina Charter as the blueprint for paradigmatic Islamic religious pluralism, Taha and an-Na'im contend that the covenant is 'discriminatory, exclusivist and fundamentalist' because the revelations of the Medina period affirm a dichotomous view of religion, placing Muslims over and against non-Muslims. In contrast to that, the doctrines emerging from the Meccan revelations appear 'egalitarian, pluralist and dem-



ocratic'.<sup>56</sup> In the vocabulary of technical terms used for defining relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, the inclusive openness implied in the notion of *Ahl al-Kitab* as part of the *milla Ibrahim*, or inclusive Abrahamic Community, is replaced by the exclusivist division between Muslims and *Ahl al-Dhimma*: non-Muslim communities tolerated on condition of paying a tax to secure the protection of their rights.<sup>57</sup> While the Shafi'i School of Law remains the most influential in Indonesia, the authors of *Interfaith Theology/Fiqh* side with criticisms expressed by heritage thinkers who regard its eponymous founder al-Shafi'i as one of the key figures responsible for establishing the theocentric epistemology that lies at the root of the discriminatory interpretation of the notion of *Ahl al-Dhimma*.<sup>58</sup>

In order to correct this undesirable situation, the interfaith *fiqh* project insists that *Dhimmi* status should be replaced by a concept of citizenship (*al-muwatana*) for non-Muslims.<sup>59</sup> For this the research looks again at the writings of the Sudanese legal scholar Abdullahi an-Na'im. In his book *Islam and the Secular State*, an-Na'im brings up two arguments for the abolition of the institution of *Dhimma* and its replacement by a system of human rights-based citizenship: First of all, the Islamic principle of reciprocity which implies that all citizens should enjoy the same legal rights; and secondly, the need to avoid the hypocrisy of upholding a theoretical system which can no longer be practically implemented.<sup>60</sup> A rather different source for the development of a non-discriminatory *fiqh* regulating the status of non-Muslims is the writings of the influential Egyptian-Qatari scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi (b.1926) on the subject of '*fiqh* of reality (*fiqh al-waqi'*) and a *fiqh* of priority (*fiqh al-awlawiyyat*)'.<sup>61</sup> Until the mid-2000s, when *Interfaith Theology/Fiqh* was written, al-Qaradawi was still holding the neo-traditionalist position informing the 'School of the Middle Way' (*al-madrasa al-wasatiyya*), of which he was one of the chief articulators. Only recently has he begun shifting towards an 'emerging *fiqh* of citizenship' based on a rereading of the Medina Charter. As a consequence, al-Qaradawi too has begun to move away from thinking about non-Muslims in terms of *Ahl al-Dhimma*, instead introducing a more inclusivist conceptualization of shared citizenship in the same polity.<sup>62</sup>

This then requires a radical transformation of classical jurisprudential thinking into a new version of *fiqh* with a pluralist outlook. The authors stress the urgency of this sea change in Islamic thinking with provocative quotes from controversial thinkers, including Karl Marx,

Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacques Derrida, who have predicted the demise of religion as we know it if there is no major rethinking of its role in modern and postmodern societies.<sup>63</sup> In line with these references, a new interfaith *fiqh* must begin with a deconstruction of existing doctrines, challenging their exclusivist truth claims and monopoly on interpretation, which has not only resulted in the elevation of classics such as al-Ghazali's *Revivification of the Religious Sciences* to virtual dogmatic status and the simultaneous repression of Ibn Rushd's *Definitive Statement Determining the Relationship between Wisdom and Divine Law*.<sup>64</sup> Such restrictions on free inquiry and acquisition of new knowledge are responsible for the ideological polarization that characterizes contemporary Islamic thinking.

However, it appears that the project does not follow through with this and does not fully adopt al-Qaradawi's progression from the implied subordination of non-Muslims under the *Dhimma* system towards an unreserved acknowledgment of *Ahl al-Kitab* as full equals. Instead, they appear to be satisfied with the Medina Charter's allegedly 'cooperative and sympathetic attitude towards the *Ahl al-Dzimma*'.<sup>65</sup> Although this seems like subscribing to Nurcholish Madjid's persistent reliance on the Medina Charter for societal reform, in the final instance the authors agree that in its place must come a depoliticized 'civil society *fiqh*', which substitutes the culture of *fiqh* condemned by al-Jabiri with an alternative that 'respects humanism, rationalism, philosophy and opposition to the state'.<sup>66</sup> For the formulation of such an alternative, the authors also rely on suggestions provided by yet another eclectic mix of voices. These include the hermeneutics of texts as cultural products and the conceptualization of an emancipatory paradigm of progressive revelation as developed by the South African anti-Apartheid activist Farid Esack and the suggestion made by the Egyptian Coptic politician Milad Hanna for a '*fiqh* which "receives others" (*qabul al-akhar*)'.<sup>67</sup> This can only be achieved by restoring the value of mutual respect found in each religious tradition and by establishing a structural authority, in terms of legislation, social, religious and educational organization, which can provide a formal regulatory framework for pluralism. However, when moving to concrete initiatives for cooperation and dialogue between religions, including modest symbolic acts such as greeting non-Muslims, attending each other's religious celebrations, or joining them in collective prayer, as well as more ambitious propositions like the possibility of inter-religious marriage,

*Interfaith Theology/Fiqh* continues to conflate the ideas of Muslim reformists like Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida and al-Tabataba'i, or the inclusive theologies developed by Christians such as Rahner, Pannikar and Kung, with the pluralist theologies and philosophies of Cantwell Smith, Knitter and Hick, and its adaptation in Islamic contexts by Fazlur Rahman, Schuon and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.<sup>68</sup> In that sense, the authors do not appear to move much beyond Budhy Munawar-Rachman's outline in *The Reorientation of Islamic Renewal*, which also remains shackled to Nurcholish Madjid's ambiguous compromise between inclusivism and pluralism.

## *A critique of Nurcholish Madjid's reason of pluralism*

At face value, Nurcholish Madjid's view of pluralism seems to fit with the earlier discussed theology of religions. His anthropocentric approach subscribes to a similar rejection of exclusive truth claims and accepts the relativity of concepts, interpretations and articulations of all derivative meanings of a given religious group. It also advocates the need for tolerance towards any individual, group, entity or community within a society. On further examination, however, Nur Khalik Ridwan's *Bourgeois Pluralism* signals a number of problems with the hermeneutics which provided a basis for this approach to religious pluralism. Madjid's criticism of truth claims is weak and limited in the sense that it protects the interests of the oppressors in the name of truth. Madjid's analytical approach begins and ends with texts, without engaging an 'archaeology of truth' that searches for the more important fundamentals, such as the factor of class interests.<sup>69</sup>

The same applies to Nurcholish Madjid's humanism, which finds its point of departure in the traditional text corpus instead of human reality. This prevents Madjid from conceiving the liberation of humankind in terms of freeing the oppressed from the oppressor. Allegedly neutral and value-free, it means that his humanism lacks critical engagement due to a failure to account for class interests, and therefore remains 'bourgeois' in orientation and attitude.<sup>70</sup> This is also evinced by his socio-historical analysis, which is again largely based on readings that focus on figures such as al-Shafi'i, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldun. Ridwan alleges that by stressing the importance of intellectual creativity and the dialogical relationship between religion and history, Nurcholish Madjid considers historiography as the 'mag-

*num opus* among all the social sciences'.<sup>71</sup> Such an approach only touches the surface without going to the heart of the matter and following through by looking for contradictions in discursive praxis. From a proletarian perspective, this is just another bourgeois analysis denying the fundamentals of the establishment's control of economic resources and dominance in the political domain.<sup>72</sup>

Just as his socio-historical analysis lacks the rigor of an 'archaeology of truth', which reveals the contradictions between the visible and invisible aspects of discursive formations, and addresses important fundamentals such as struggle over the economic and political status quo, Madjid's analysis of religious symbolism is based on a semantic-syntagmatic model of semiotics which is vertical, sequential and linear in orientation. In contrast to Ridwan's paradigmatic alternative, which understands language on a horizontal level and accounts for the 'zig-zag' and associative relations which produce a plurality of meanings, Madjid's model only deals with language games without seeing the connection between language as a product brought forth by the composition of texts and the invisible factors involved in that process.<sup>73</sup> Aside from the visible and invisible aspects of narratives, contexts too can be categorized as 'read' and 'unread'. While the former consists of the visible aspects of discourses, the latter engages the more problematic non-visible aspects which are 'difficult to know without the disclosure of the fundamentals that influence authors in composing texts'.<sup>74</sup> Madjid's text-oriented hermeneutics does not account for that deeper context of collective interests that also shape the meaning of texts.

Transposing these findings to religious pluralism, Ridwan argues that this lack of analytical clarity explains Madjid's inability to distinguish the particularity of faith—or *iman* in the terminology of historical Islam—from Islam in a universal sense.<sup>75</sup> This conflation is also mirrored in the latent inclusivism that characterizes the religious pluralism advocated by his followers. For similar reasons Madjid's usage of the term *Ahl al-Kitab* only accounts for formally recognized religions, because in extending its meaning beyond Jews and Christians he never mentions adherents of indigenous religious traditions or practices.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, he only talks about *Ahl al-Kitab* in general terms without addressing the legal consequences of extending the concept beyond Jews and Christians, nor does he recognize a need for distinguishing between oppressed religious groups and religious oppressors.<sup>77</sup> Also quoting Pancasila as Indonesia's definitive national ideology in both a legal and constitutional

sense with *kalimatun sawa*’ still creates a problem for groups who are presently excluded from its protection, such as the communists.<sup>78</sup> The dilemma is further aggravated by Madjid’s understanding of communists as immoral people who do not believe, and his agreement with banning the PKI. Ridwan counters that in reality there are Muslim communists, but that Madjid fails to see that because his use of the notion of pluralism does not explicitly account for oppressed segments of the population. Moreover, since it applies only to those leading what are in his view ‘respectable lives’, Ridwan contends that Madjid’s understanding of pluralism is subjective.<sup>79</sup>

Returning to the earlier noted taxonomy of the theology of religions distinguishing between exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists, Ridwan argues that since Madjid still regards ‘the other’ from his own Islamic perspective, he cannot be considered as a true pluralist. Thus, when it comes to the notions of Islam as a universal religion, *Ahl al-Kitab*, and Pancasila as *kalimatun sawa*’, he finds Madjid wavering between pluralism and communalism.<sup>80</sup> In terms of praxis, this mode of thinking dovetailed nicely with those of the New Order, and Ridwan alleges that as Madjid’s earliest ideas on modernization and secularization were received with sympathy by the government, his subsequent rejection of Islamic party politics even led to a ‘symbiosis’ with the regime.<sup>81</sup> Thus, as he became part of the establishment, the theme of emancipating the oppressed was sidelined.<sup>82</sup> Therefore Ridwan considers that bourgeois pluralism is very different from emancipating pluralism. Its toleration is not minimalist or neutral, in the sense that it does not condone repression on any ground: religious, ethnic, political or otherwise. Religion is a means to emancipating humankind and transforming existence into a peaceful and better life. It fights those who discriminate against others, either within the same faith community or against those who belong to a different religion, or even those who do not belong to any formal religion. It opposes those who fail to accord truth, equality, justice or protection to the weak. Notions of emancipating pluralism themselves mean solidarity with whichever religion. In the final instance, it is not working on the level of the bourgeois. On the contrary, according to Nur Khalik Ridwan this type of religious pluralism is not rhetorical, but a praxis operating at grassroots level where it is working for the poor, the laborers and peasants.<sup>83</sup>

*An Ahmad Wahib revival*

A more forceful argument in favor of undiluted religious pluralism can actually be traced to another renewal thinker from Nurcholish Madjid's generation. Thirty years after Ahmad Wahib's premature death in 1973, a rediscovery and re-appreciation of his writings began taking hold among budding young Muslim intellectuals. Because of his early demise, Ahmad Wahib has received much less attention both inside and outside Indonesia than the other members of the Renewal of Islamic Thinking Movement who launched their sweeping ideas in the 1970s.<sup>84</sup> The youngest generation of progressive Muslims emerging in the early 2000s are well aware of Nurcholish Madjid's enduring legacy of introducing the secularization thesis into innovative Islamic thinking. They also recognize Abdurrahman Wahid's importance for advocating universal human rights and appreciate Dawam Rahardjo as a seminal figure in establishing NGO-*pesantren* alliances for grass-roots-level development projects. Now they form a new vanguard hailing Ahmad Wahib as the most articulate promoter of the total freedom of thought and leading 'destroyer of the inertia of thinking'.<sup>85</sup>

Testament to this 'Wahib revival' is the establishment of an essay prize in his name, commemorating his significance for the promotion of religious pluralism. First awarded in 2003, the *Sayembara Ahmad Wahib Award* (AWA) is an initiative of the Ciputat chapter of the HMI and the Ciputat Student Forum (FORMACI), mentored by Paramadina's Ihsan Ali-Fauzi and supported by the Freedom Institute.<sup>86</sup> In 2010, some of the winning entries were collected in a volume of essays, published under the title *Non-Apologetic Renewal*.<sup>87</sup> It offers a further illustration of Wahib's influence on young writers who are just starting to establish themselves as critical Muslim thinkers.

Ahmad Wahib was originally from Madura, sometimes referred to as the 'Island of a Thousand Pesantren', because—together with the Eastern Javanese district of Jombang—it forms a stronghold of the traditionalist NU.<sup>88</sup> But Wahib was a man with a mind of his own: First by enrolling in the mathematics and physics program at UGM, and later by sending his son and daughter to secular government schools. During his student years in Yogyakarta, he also became active in the HMI, eventually joining an inner circle involved in determining the organization's general policies. The decade he spent in student circles (1961–71) coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in postco-

lonial Indonesian history, as the country lived through the authoritarianism of Sukarno's Guided Democracy, witnessed a military coup, followed by the atrocities of the anti-communist pogroms of 1965–6, and the establishment of the autocratic New Order regime. It also caused personal upheaval to Ahmad Wahib, culminating in his dramatic resignation—together with his close friend Djohan Effendi—from HMI in 1969. He took this step as a sign of protest against the organization's ever deeper involvement in politics, its virulent anti-communist stance and increasing tendency towards religious exclusivism.<sup>89</sup> Throughout this period Wahib kept a diary which was only discovered after his death and published posthumously by Djohan Effendi and Ismed Natsir as *Upheaval in Islamic Thinking*.<sup>90</sup> Its release in 1981 caused quite a stir, not least because of its iconoclasm against the religious establishment and the condemnation of the 'reactionary and primitive' attitude of fellow student activists such as Imaduddin Abdulrahim, the intellectual and spiritual mentor of present-day figures of a similar disposition like Adian Husaini.

Ahmad Wahib's resignation from the HMI caused a radical rethinking of his attitude towards Islam and religion in general, leading him to the conclusion that total freedom of thought is the only remedy against the narrow-minded defensive attitude of many Muslim thinkers and intellectuals, and that there is also no alternative to embracing pluralism. The Australian scholar Anthony Johns has provided a translation of a passage from the diary where Wahib expresses this resolve in verse:

For us theist and atheist can gather together  
Muslim and Christian jest together  
Artist and athlete freely associate  
Unbeliever and devout be close friends  
But pluralist and anti-pluralist can never meet.<sup>91</sup>

There is obvious tension between accepting the revealed truth of religion while simultaneously claiming freedom of thought. It frequently led Wahib to uncomfortable discoveries where the teachings of man seem superior to divine revelations. The only way to overcome such apparent contradictions was through scrupulous intellectual honesty. To Wahib this means rejecting the widespread habit among Muslim intellectuals to make a priori judgements. Instead he plots a personal course away from what he calls the 'tyranny of pride [of] being supposedly genuinely Muslim' and the 'tyranny of fear' of being called an

atheist, unbeliever, Mu‘tazili or secularist.<sup>92</sup> To Ahmad Wahib’s mind, that meant that ‘the only repository left for trust is the individual, on whom, in the last resort, the responsibility for the search for truth must lie’.<sup>93</sup> His disillusion with the *ulama* has already been noted, and this too contributed to an idiosyncratic approach towards the development of a kind of personal *fiqh*, which rejects the consensus of the scholars (*ijma‘*), and regards the Qur’an and Hadith not as sources of law, but data for a biography of the Prophet. Thus, Ahmad Wahib’s advocacy of freethinking (*berpikir bebas*) forms part of an open-ended reading of the Qur’an and an interpretation of Islam as a continuing historicized process; a challenging exercise which humankind is nevertheless expected to take up because God has endowed it with the faculty of reason.<sup>94</sup> His diary is full of references to both a collective Muslim inability to translate Islamic values properly into reality, and frustration over his personal lack of understanding of Islam or failure to grasp its perfection.<sup>95</sup> Instead of ‘being Muslim’, Wahib talks of ‘becoming Muslim’ (*menjadi Muslim*) and ‘becoming Wahib’ (*me-Wahib*), which in turn can also be read as ‘becoming Indonesian’.<sup>96</sup>

The essayists contributing to *Non-Apologetic Renewal* stress how Ahmad Wahib’s quest leads to a processual understanding of the way Islam is bound up with the Indonesian context. They see the diary as constituting an open text in itself; both in its dealings with the Qur’an and the dissection of the Muhammad’s biography in order to come to a contextual or—as Ahmad Wahib calls it—conditional Islam.<sup>97</sup> In this view, there are two sets of values in Islam: contextual and fixed. The former needs to be adjusted along with the changing circumstances experienced by real-life human societies, while the latter—as ‘a well-tested framework of values’, including justice, solidarity and tolerance—needs to be preserved under all circumstances.<sup>98</sup> Reflective of Ahmad Wahib’s implicit criticisms of the finality attributed to Islam by Muslim normativists, the conflation of these contextual and fixed values goes a long way in explaining the ‘anarchy of Tawhid thinking’ represented by the likes of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.<sup>99</sup> These academic and idealistic dimensions can be expanded and made applicable to concrete situations, such as the shari‘atization of Indonesian society, the persecution of the Ahmadiyyah and those speaking out in defense of their legitimate rights. Against the background of the FPI attack on a gathering of the ‘National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief’ (AKKBB), held on 1 June 2008 to express solidar-



ity with the plight of Indonesia's Ahmadiyya Community, the contribution by Fahd Pahdepie (b.1986) entitled 'Tracing Transformative Piety in Ahmad Wahib's Attempt of Transfiguration' uses the motifs of *Abdullah*, or servant of God, and *khalifatullah*, or God's viceregent, to illustrate the need to change passive submission to God into an active disposition towards saving and liberating 'The Other'.<sup>100</sup> For that purpose he explores an intertextuality between Ahmad Wahib's diary and the writings of Kuntowijoyo, Moeslim Abdurrahman and Munir Mulkhan on transformative Islam, which together offer an alternative theology geared towards resolving modern problems so that religious behavior benefits others. This transformation attains a prophetic character when it expands the history of community-building in one society to others, turning it into a participative, open and emancipatory process.<sup>101</sup> According to Munir Mulkhan, human viceregency points towards a form of humanism grounded in the realization that religions perform a function in human life, not the other way around, whereby humankind is thought to be made for religion. Consequently, religious teachings must be 'interpreted in the light of human interests not for the sake of God'.<sup>102</sup> For similar reasons, Sunlie Thomas Alexander considers Ahmad Wahib's hermeneutical and anthropocentric approach as a foreshadowing of the work of Mohammed Arkoun and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.<sup>103</sup>

The diary puts Ahmad Wahib in the same league as other members of the first postcolonial generation who shaped Indonesia's Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and who continue to influence progressive Muslim thinkers today. No longer concerned with launching sweeping ideas, the 'involution of Islamic renewal' now manifests itself through a concrete implementation by present-day intellectuals in the fields of action, such as human rights and Islamic education.<sup>104</sup> However, these more applied writings still produce fresh interpretations of the underlying concepts, which are helpful in developing new methods for translating the grand ideas of Madjid's generation into clear agendas for projects dealing with democratization, interfaith relations, inter-religious marriage, polygamy and gender equality.

Ahmad Wahib's rejection of the authority of the *ulama*, his disregard for *ijma'* and its replacement by an alternative—highly personal—interpretation of the Qur'an through a heavy reliance on reason and knowledge of human history have led Anthony Johns to venture a

speculative thought, which must be considered particularly contentious in the context of the present chapter. He suggests that Wahib's ideas 'may well derive from the Lahore wing of the Ahmadi movement'.<sup>105</sup> Admitting that none of the points raised belong exclusively to the Ahmadiyya, Johns nevertheless maintains that Ahmad Wahib had close connections with the Ahmadis (including his friend Djohan Effendi), and that Yogyakarta—the place where he had written his diary—also long hosted this highly educated minority group. In his contribution to *Non-Apologetic Renewal*, Dawam Rahardjo notes that Wahib's 'smashing of conventional views, or in present-day jargon, deconstruction' reflects before anything else an antipathy for the religious fundamentalism which dominated the reactionary Islamic discourses of the 1960s and 1970s. A similar tendency is now found in the frank and courageous writings of the likes of Ulil Abshar-Abdalla.<sup>106</sup> However, not all contributors to the volume embrace these calls for uncompromising pluralism. Invoking the writings of Arab intellectuals such as Ali Harb and Muhammad Shahrur, and speaking of an 'inclusivization' of the pluralism discourse, young *pesantren* activists such as Fathor Rahman (b.1984) and Muhammad Takdir Ilahi (b.1987) still remain close to Nurcholish Madjid and Indonesian advocates of perennialism.<sup>107</sup>

### *Towards true religious pluralism?*

Meanwhile, the two surviving key members of the former Limited Group, Dawam Rahardjo and Djohan Effendi, have carried the torch of religious pluralism into twenty-first-century Indonesia. At the 2012 launch of Effendi's book on the Qur'an, Budhy Munawar-Rachman characterized him as an untiring 'militant fighter for tolerance'.<sup>108</sup> This commitment can be traced back to Djohan Effendi's association with Ahmad Wahib during their student years in Yogyakarta and his subsequent role as the chairman of the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP). While attributing Effendi's enduring concern for the freedom of religion to both his understanding of Pancasila as providing the required common platform grounded in the Qur'anic notion of *kalimatun sawa*, or 'Common Word', and to the preservation of religion as one of the core principles of al-Shatibi's *maqasid al-shari'a*, Munawar-Rachman claims that part of that mission also involves an accommodation of relativism and syncretism. This interpretation sets

Effendi not only apart from interfaith dialogue partners such as Franz Magnis-Suseno, but also from fellow renewal thinkers Nurcholish Madjid and Dawam Rahardjo.

In his contribution to a Festschrift in honor of Dawam Rahardjo, aptly titled *For the Sake of Tolerance and Pluralism*, Syafi'i Anwar highlights that Rahardjo was one of the remaining key figures from the first postcolonial generation of Muslim intellectuals who helped shape the beginnings of progressive Islamic thinking; Rahardjo insisted that all religions must be considered as true, in the sense that this truth is accorded in the light of the convictions of their respective adherents. Consequently he rejects MUI's interpretation of pluralism because it exemplifies the hegemonic certitudes held by conservative *ulama*, adding that neither the state nor MUI have the right to say that one religion is true and that the other is false, or declaring which practices or doctrines are deviations, as has happened to the Ahmadis and others.<sup>109</sup>

However, forbidding pluralism is a measure that runs counter to the historical disposition of Indonesia itself and to its Pancasila Doctrine. In the eyes of Effendi this makes the reasoning behind MUI's decision illogical.<sup>110</sup> Given the limited electoral support for religiously-oriented parties advocating the introduction of Islamic law, Djohan Effendi believes that religious pluralism should even tolerate atheism. Notwithstanding the fact that this is problematic under the Pancasila Doctrine's insistence that all Indonesians believe in one God, other first-generation postcolonial intellectuals, such as Nurcholish Madjid and Maarif Syafii, agree with Djohan Effendi that 'atheism is itself a "belief" and a "religion" that must be respected'.<sup>111</sup> However, as the case of the Sumatran civil servant Alexander Aan has shown, at present this is still taboo in Indonesia.<sup>112</sup> Condoning atheism is also important in the interest of what Nurcholish Madjid once dubbed 'polemical atheists'—those charged with atheism but who are in fact not making that claim. This is neither a modern or contemporary issue, nor a matter confined to Indonesia alone. Throughout history this has been a much-used device in religious and philosophical debates. From medieval figures such as Ar-Razi, Ibn Rushd, Ibn al-Arabi and al-Suhrawardi until the more recent case of Ulil Abshar-Abdalla in 2002, those considered to hold deviant views have been accused of atheism, which effectively meant excommunication (*takfir*).<sup>113</sup> Those holding on to such reactionary opinion conclude that this makes 'their blood *hala'*—meaning that they can be lawfully killed, but progressive

Muslims reject that conclusion. In a truly pluralist society nobody should be faced with such a prospect.

Notwithstanding their acknowledged indebtedness to Nurcholish Madjid's ideas, self-confessed liberals from the Freedom Institute, such as JIL founders Luthfi Assyauckanie and Ulil Abshar-Abdallah, believe that Madjid's strand of Islamic renewal thinking does not go far enough in promoting religious pluralism. In the earlier discussion of the different opinions among Indonesia's progressive Muslims about secularism, it was already noted that as unabashed advocates of secularizing the political domain, they warned against introducing any kind of caveat in the secularization thesis or holding reservations against a secular society, because this can have grave repercussions for religious pluralism. For Luthfi Assyauckanie, this is reason enough to reject the Religious Democratic State (RDS) model as a weak compromise with unresolved contradictions and persistent dilemmas when it comes to safeguarding the inherent religious plurality of Indonesia society.<sup>114</sup> As a proponent of the Liberal Democratic State (LDS) model, he finds RDS wanting because the very principle of pluralism depends on the rigorous differentiation—although Assyauckanie does not hesitate to speak of a complete separation—between the respective roles of religion and the state, which can only be guaranteed by a fully-fledged liberal democracy.<sup>115</sup> Accordingly:

[The RDS and LDS models] can be distinguished with regard to the idea of religious freedom and pluralism by understanding the two concepts often used in religious studies: 'inclusivist' and 'pluralist'. The inclusivist standpoint regards one's own faith as the only completely true religion. [...] The pluralist standpoint regards all religions as correct, valid and legitimate.<sup>116</sup>

Although not making such a clear and explicit terminological distinction, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla too considers Nurcholish Madjid's thinking about inter-religious relations insufficiently progressive, because it is as a mixed product of inclusivist theology and pluralist theorizing. He argues that this position is actually grounded in Madjid's later thinking, when the dominant classical legacy made its influence more strongly felt in terms of the ethos of the so-called *agama hanif*, or 'hanif religion' traceable to Abraham. This re-appreciation of the classic Islamic tradition also involved re-engagement with the notions of *Tawhid* and *Aswaja*.<sup>117</sup> However, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla thinks that Nurcholish Madjid's earlier ideas on secularization and desacralization demonstrate a clear acceptance of the relativity of all human thinking

*about* religion. In that sense, the *pembaruan* thinking of the 1970s was diametrically opposed to the confrontational apologetics of the kind of ‘Salafi anti-intellectualism’ put forward by the reactionary Muslim bloc.<sup>118</sup> Madjid’s earlier thinking stimulates a way of thinking about religion that goes beyond the still latent apologetic undercurrent found in the thought of the inclusivists, who have not completely given up their own truth claims. Consequently, Abshar-Abdalla reasons that liberal Muslim intellectuals who subscribe to true religious pluralism must assume an attitude that expresses ‘at one and the same time irony and solidarity’.<sup>119</sup>

This also explains the objections of other uncompromising pluralists such as Luthfi Assyaukanie against the Jakarta Charter and any other formal attempts to introduce Islamic law to Indonesia, because it undermines the pluralism that is a basic foundation for a form of political liberalism that promotes a clear and rigorous differentiation between religion and state, insisting on the equality of all beliefs and the individual freedom to choose any one of them, or even none at all. Even Abdurrahman Wahid has gone on record as equating pluralism with liberalism ‘in the sense that both concepts esteem the basic rights of individuals rather than their existence as a collective group’.<sup>120</sup> This position also motivates the anti-shari‘a stance of other proponents of the LDS Model: Assyaukanie recalls how Masdar Mas‘udi uses the argument that religious matters are a personal and communal—not a state—concern in order to reject any government-enforced implementation of Islamic laws and to plea for the secularity of the political domain.

These interpretations of pluralism by second- and third-generation Muslim intellectuals contrast starkly with MUI’s view, which—in the view of such intellectuals as Budhy Munawar-Rachman, Rumadi and even the HTI’s Farid Wajdi—is not only ‘wrong, lacking in nuance and theological reflection’, but also mistaken in its hegemonic pretensions. As noted in the discussion of theology of religions at the beginning of this chapter, one key aspect of a pluralist attitude towards religion is the realization that no tradition can monopolize truth or lay exclusive claims to the path of salvation. Yet, as the self-proclaimed organ of Indonesia’s Muslims, MUI has appropriated that right. It has jumped to the conclusion that the proponents of pluralism hold the opinion that all religions are the same. This has encouraged others to compare pluralism to a virus threatening to infect the country. However, pluralism is more properly understood as a concept that recognizes dif-

ference and identity. Consequently, as explained by Abd Moqsith Ghazali of the Wahid Institute: MUI's interpretation of pluralism as the equation of all religions is a contradiction in terms, because what pluralism in itself presupposes is exactly the presence of a plurality.<sup>121</sup>

To Syafi'i Anwar's mind, the notion of *sunnatullah*, which he translates as 'divine order', gives a coherent expression to Islam's take on pluralism. It has its origins in the Qur'an, where chapter forty-nine cautions against absolutist truth claims and emphasizes God's purposeful creation of humankind into a diversity of genders, tribes and nations 'so that you may know each other'.<sup>122</sup> The Qur'an also affirms the continued validity of earlier revelations and scripture, which serves as another indication that difference and diversity are an inherent part of God's omnipotence, while at the same time rendering impossible reductionist interpretations of all religions as being the same. According to Anwar, pluralism is a value system that appreciates religious plurality as a fundamental and inherent part of the human condition. He agrees with Dawam Rahardjo that this implies a recognition of the truth claim of other religions as pertinent to the adherents of that religion. This is also the reason for sharing Magnis-Suseno's view that pluralism is neither a form of relativism nor syncretism, because that runs counter to the genuine acknowledgement of different truth claims and to the dimension of plurality as a recognition of the distinctiveness of religious traditions. It is by missing these two points that MUI's interpretation of pluralism is erroneous.<sup>123</sup> Anwar thinks that MUI is mistaken due to its own subjective preconception of pluralism as an ideology that would lead to 'religious anarchy'.<sup>124</sup> This scaremongering is used by some religious activists as an excuse for resorting to violence in order to assert their exclusivist claims against 'the others'. Invoking Arab scholars such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Khaled Abou El Fadl, Anwar also blames the fatwa for revving up the engine of radical Salafi literalism, which takes scripture only as a text instead of a discursive formation with historical and sociological dimensions.

MUI's Fatwa 7 has created a climate that obscures what the principal investigator of the Harvard Pluralism Project, Diana Eck, calls the 'language of pluralism' which speaks of 'binding-together, involvement, and participation'.<sup>125</sup> It has interrupted the dialogue and exchange of thought through which pluralism becomes a dynamic social and intellectual process, and which had been well underway in Indonesia until the summer of 2005.<sup>126</sup> The work of this leading sociologist of religion has also left

its mark on Mustofa Bisri and Emha Ainun Nadjib's understanding of pluralism.<sup>127</sup> Both raised in the *pesantren* milieu, well-versed in Islamic spirituality or Sufism, and accomplished men of letters *cum* artists, this duo can be considered the epigones of Indonesia's contemporary *Sastra Sufi* genre (literature imbued with Sufi teachings).<sup>128</sup> At the same time, against the background of the shift in religious authority due to the slow response of Indonesia's two major Muslim mass organizations to the rise of reactionary Muslim activism and the subsequent conservative turn affecting both NU and Muhammadiyah, radical Islamist elements feel emboldened in exhibiting intolerance towards what they consider deviations. Alongside Eck's interpretation of pluralism as a counterforce for the tendency of dominant groups in a society to discriminate, Bisri and Nadjib also invoke Nurcholish Madjid's promotion of a 'non-coercive culture of civility', Casanova's public religion and William E. Connolly's theory of deep pluralism—which contrasts with shallow secular pluralism—as instances of 'peaceful "engagement with diversity"'.<sup>129</sup>

Indonesia has a long historical experience of religious diversity and has developed its own postcolonial version of 'Unity in Diversity' (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). This motto is in need of new creative interpretations in the wake of an influx of 'global elites and transnational mission movements', including Tablighi Jama'at, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizbut Tahrir, as well as non-Muslim spiritual movements such as Brahma Kumari or the Anand Krishna Centres.<sup>130</sup> Referencing John Hick, John Esposito and Michael Peletz, both Bisri and Nadjib stress the importance of distinguishing between the theological and social-scientific dimensions of religious pluralism:

As a theological concept, religious pluralism refers to an attitude and a standpoint that considers a variety of religious denominations as equal paths to truth. This standpoint transcends inclusivism, in which other religious traditions are considered to represent the truth, although not to the same intensity of one's own tradition. As a civic political concept, religious pluralism refers to an attitude and standpoint that recognises a variety of religious denominations and considers them to be a legitimate part of society.<sup>131</sup>

While Muslim intellectuals have played a role in the articulation of the notion of pluralism, the implementation of the concept in the Indonesian context has largely been a state affair of turning it into a political instrument. Still, some perceive this as sheltering minorities that form a potential threat to the country's majority; especially Muslim minority groups such as Shi'ites or offshoots like the Ahmadiyya

that are considered as deviating from so-called mainstream Islam. Bisri and Nadjib position themselves as unreserved pluralists, univocally speaking out in favor of 'intra-Islamic pluralism' and defending the rights of Indonesia's Ahmadis after MUI's call for banning the movement. They disapprove of *perda syariat*, because it is detrimental to the position of non-Muslim minorities and thus undermines the country's stability. In contrast to members of JIL, who have been stigmatized as liberals in the Western sense of the word, Bisri and Nadjib are given more leeway in criticizing MUI and also appear to have 'much more freedom and many more possibilities to promote religious pluralism in Indonesia'.<sup>132</sup> Undoubtedly, this has something to do with Mustofa Bisri's position as NU vice chairman (notwithstanding the fact that he is also the father-in-law of JIL founder Ulil Abshar-Abdalla) and Emha Ainun Nadjib's popularity as a musician and performer. However, even with such high-profile backing, religious pluralism remains a very contentious term.

### *The reactionary contestation of religious pluralism*

In 2010, Indonesia's largest Islamic missionary movement, the DDII, published its own contribution to the pluralism debate. Written by one of its senior leaders and most vocal critics of what reactionaries call liberal Islam, Adian Husaini's *Religious Pluralism: Enemy of Religions* makes strategic use of the distinction between exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism by pointing to the Western origins of this taxonomy. As has become clear from Budhy Munawar-Rachman's genealogy of the concept, there are indeed connections between religious pluralism, Christian theology and religious studies as a field of scholarly inquiry in Western academe, but Husaini's subsequent engagement evinces the recurring and widely held reactionary Muslims' concern with 'intellectual invasions' (*ghazwul fikr*) from the outside and the closely associated preoccupation with what are perceived as foreign anti-Muslim conspiracies. Long before MUI issued its fatwa, religious pluralism had become widespread in Indonesia, with Adian Husaini tracing its origins to the influence of the School of Theosophy in Dutch colonial times. Subsequently, the term was given wider currency through the publication of Ahmad Wahib's diary and the activities of his fellow Limited Group members Djohan Effendi and Dawam Rahardjo. The latter two have remained active advocates of religious pluralism as part of their social transformation project.



In line with the responses of reactionaries from other religions, Adian Husaini presents the MUI fatwa as a form of resistance against the 'poison that is weakening faith and belief in the truth of Islam'.<sup>133</sup> Taking the totalizing view of Islam as not just a theology, but a social, economic, political, cultural and civilizational concept grounded in the Qur'an and the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, Husaini stresses that a 'clear distinction must be made between people who believe and act righteously, and unbelievers'.<sup>134</sup> Husaini is uncompromising in his commitment to safeguarding the integrity of Islam by upholding the core principle of *tawhid*, vehemently rejecting the view that the confession of faith is somehow less important than acting righteously.

Adian Husaini too draws on the writings on theology of religions by Christian pluralists such as John Hick and Paul Knitter. However, he has his own reading of their intellectual trajectory and comes to a very different conclusion from the inescapable need for religious pluralism in an increasingly interconnected world. According to Husaini, this new direction in Christian thinking is due to particular experiences within Christendom, including the trauma caused by the power struggle between Catholic and Protestant churches since the Middle Ages; the specificities of Christian theology; and the problematic nature of the text of the Bible.<sup>135</sup> Although he does not develop these various points any further, he apparently wants to cast doubt over the relevance of the notion of pluralism for other religious traditions. Husaini is concerned that this theology is nevertheless exercising considerable influence on Indonesia's Muslims through intellectuals such as the late Nurcholish Madjid, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla and others who are either Westernized themselves or convinced that the only way for Muslims to progress is by the wholesale adoption of Western civilization.<sup>136</sup>

This development is not limited to Indonesia alone, but forms part of a worldwide phenomenon through globally operating Western governments and NGOs seeking systematically to influence their counterparts in the Muslim world. As cases in point, Husaini gives the examples of the roles played by the American embassy in Jakarta and the Asia Foundation. Citing the embassy's own website, Husaini writes that the US government sponsors programs in Indonesia's secondary and tertiary Islamic education system, and facilitates training visits to the US for academics and media professionals in order to introduce them to religious tolerance, gender equality issues and human rights in general. Meanwhile, the Asia Foundation has established links with progressive Muslim activists in Indonesia through the country's two

largest Islamic organizations, the NU and the Muhammadiyah—which are ‘the main focus for the infiltration of the notion [of religious pluralism]’.<sup>137</sup> As examples, Husaini singles out the journals *Tashwirul Afkar* and *Tanwir*, published by the NU’s Lakpesdam and the Muhammadiyah Centre for the Study of Religion and Civilization respectively. Analysis of these periodicals and other writings suggests that young Islamic post-traditionalists and activists of JIMM are among the first to base their advocacy of religious tolerance on the categorical differentiation between exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. As evidence, Adian Husaini presents a theme issue of *Tashwirul Afkar* from 2001 on Islamic education. It opens with an article by Khamami Zada entitled ‘Liberating Islamic Education: From Exclusivism to Inclusivism and Pluralism’.<sup>138</sup> Modernist Muslims are not immune to the charge. Invoking the earlier mentioned notion of *sunnatullah* as the Islamic equivalent of the concept of Natural Law, Adian Husaini contends that this motivated JIMM activists to proclaim that:

Religious pluralism has already become divine law [*hukum Tuhan (sunnatullah)*] which cannot be changed. And therefore, it is also impossible for us to be opposed to it and avoid it. As Muslims, we do not have any other option than taking a positive and optimistic attitude by accepting religious pluralism as divine law.<sup>139</sup>

Aside from the large representative bodies of Indonesia’s Muslim community and their associate NGOs and networks, others bearing the brunt of Husaini’s hostility for their close collaboration with foreign donors include the International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP) and its main organ, the periodical *Al-Wasathiyyah*, which are both directed by M. Syafi’i Anwar. Husaini also criticizes ICIP for collaborating with the Asia Foundation in the project on interfaith theology and *fiqh* which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Others are attacked for what he calls the manipulation of Islamic doctrine by misinterpretations of the Qur’an and by abusing commentaries from earlier reformists such as Rashid Rida. As examples of such disingenuous readings arguing that the *Ahl al-Kitab* can be redeemed even without believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad, Husaini singles out the NU’s Abdul Moqsih Ghazali, the pro-Shi’i intellectual Jalaluddin Rakhmat, and the Tanzania-born but US-based professor of religious studies Abdulaziz Sachedina, who—according to Husaini—has been censored by no less than the Iraqi Ayatollah Sistani as presenting views that do not conform to Twelver Shi’ism.

## CONTENTIOUS TRIANGULATION

As a counterpoint to pluralism, the subtitle of Husaini's book—*Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Islamic views of the Notion of Religious Pluralism*—shows how the author is striking up a tactical alliance with respondents from other faiths. To deflect or pre-empt any challenges that Islam is uniquely exclusivist or claiming undue privilege, he begins by foregrounding the proponents and opponents of religious pluralism in Catholicism, Protestantism and Hinduism, before moving to the Muslim reactions.

To that end Husaini makes Franz Magnis-Suseno into a rather unlikely ally. One of Indonesia's leading Catholic participants in inter-faith dialogue initiatives for many decades, Magnis-Suseno too challenges the arguments in favor of religious pluralism by Hick, Knitter and Pannikar—all of whom reason that exclusivist religious truth claims are instances of arrogant intolerance. By way of alternative, they posit a generic religiosity of humankind in recognition of a shared or common transcendental or metaphysical dimension of the universe, while still leaving a space for belief in a personal God.<sup>140</sup> Magnis-Suseno notes that this kind of interpretation is the product of a certain *Zeitgeist*, which made its first appearance with the Enlightenment philosophy and Kant's view of religion as a morality or philosophy of ethics. Nowadays it is also associated with New Age religions and their re-appreciation of the metaphysical, cosmic, holistic and mystical. Adian Husaini alleges that Magnis-Suseno regards the underlying motivations of thinking about religion in such terms as a matter of aesthetics rather than a search for truth. That is the reason why these modern manifestations of morality and religiosity also view the religious truth claims of established religious traditions as intolerant and why they take such a negative view of words like dogma. The Catholic Church rejects this kind of understanding of pluralism and continues to adhere to the doctrine of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In Magnis-Suseno's interpretation, real tolerance does not consist in reducing all religions to some shared common denominator, but acceptance and respect for difference through an inclusivist attitude while at the same time holding on to one's own faith tradition.

As religions without the unified hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, Protestantism and Hinduism do not present a single attitude towards religious pluralism. Husaini cites the Reverend Stevri I. Lumintang as the key critic of the Protestant equivalent of religious pluralism in Indonesia. Locally known as *Teologi Abu-Abu*, it says

that dismissing Christian truth claims, such as the absolute finality of Jesus as a manifestation of the divine, makes pluralism a wolf in sheep's clothes. Religious pluralism undermines the very foundations of the church by replacing it with what is in effect a new religion, because its implications are not just sociological or anthropological, but philosophical as well.<sup>141</sup> Relativism supported by the present-day spirit of globalization also makes ethnic, cultural and religious pluralities into a socio-political reality which contributes further to the rejection of the finality and normative exclusivism associated with the uniqueness of the Christ figure. Thus pluralism is trying to force traditional or orthodox theology to give way to a deconstructionist cleansing of Christian thinking.

Hinduism is affected by similar developments, inviting resistance to the 'radical universalism' that has developed into the hallmark of a Hindu version of religious pluralism, but which is alien to its traditional practices and beliefs.<sup>142</sup> In Husaini's account, radical universalism is the invention of neo-Hindus influenced by modern Western thinking, such as the founder of the Bengali *Brahmo Samaj*, Ram Mohan Roy, and his followers Debendranath Tagore and Kashub Chandra Sen. They and others like Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi have mixed Hinduism with non-Vedic religions and elements of liberal Christianity. As alternatives to this misguided deviation, Husaini showcases Indonesian Hindus Made Madrasuta and Frank Gaetano Morales for making the same argument as Christian critics of religious pluralism. Real appreciation of religious diversity is achieved through the celebration of difference, not by reducing it to a new religion, such as the neo-Hindu Radical Universalism, which betrays 'the dignity and integrity of its ancient heritage and [is] weakening the very core of the Hindu religion's philosophical-cultural matrix'.<sup>143</sup>

These shared views of practising Catholics, Protestants and Hindus serve as Husaini's vindication for supporting MUI's decision that religious pluralism is incompatible with Islam and that for that reason Muslims are forbidden to subscribe to that notion. He also sides with Anis Malik Thoha (b.1964), an NU intellectual educated in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan who is considered to be close to the late General President Sahal Mahfudh. Currently working at Husaini's alma mater IUM in Malaysia, Thoha too is of the opinion that 'religious pluralism is in fact a new religion which is very destructive to Islam and other religions'.<sup>144</sup> This does not mean that Islam opposes freedom of

religion. On the contrary, invoking the Qur'an verses stating that 'there is no compulsion in religion' and 'unto you your religion, and unto me my religion', Husaini contends that Islam has recognized that principle from its very inception.<sup>145</sup> Husaini's unpacking of his core argument, which revolves around terminology and semantics, poses a real challenge to the stance of progressive Muslims:

[...] in the conception of Islam, it is impossible to declare that all concepts (-isms) or religions are true and constitute equally valid ways towards The Lord. Therefore, a great many religions are in fact clearly wrong in the view of Islam. Thus there is a fundamental difference between recognizing and accepting the diversity of religions and acknowledging the truth claims of all religions. The first can be considered as recognizing the plurality of religions, while the second is an acknowledgment of religious pluralism. Islam recognizes and accepts difference and diversity, but clearly does not acknowledge that all religions are equally valid paths towards the One and Only God.<sup>146</sup>

This argumentation serves to call into question the accuracy and consistency of a progressive interpretation of religious pluralism and the tolerance of others, because—at the same time—progressive Muslims too claim to remain committed to Islam in both conviction and action; which would mean they are actually only recognizing plurality rather than advocating pluralism as a new religion.

In this context it pays to recall the more pragmatic rethinking of the relationship between state, religion and law by what Masdar Hilmi calls meliorist Muslim politicians from the PBB and PKS. The pragmatism informing these new positions also offers an opportunity for reactionary Muslim activists to accommodate religious pluralism. At the same time it is important to realize that—like the more utopian HTI—PKS neither embraces the idea of a 'salad bowl' nor 'melting pot'—terms introduced by Horace Kallen as metaphors for the shift from inclusivism to pluralism.<sup>147</sup> Instead, Hilmi says that 'PKS wants to break down the idea of pluralism into a more concrete concept by referring to the spirit of the Madinah Charter', something which is also not alien to the so-called Islamic neo-modernism developed by Nurcholish Madjid and those who continue to build on that legacy.<sup>148</sup> In the reasoning of former PKS leader Hidayat Nur Wahid, the Covenant of Medina offers a formula for accommodating religious diversity in a democratic structure, which grants all citizens equal rights regardless of their religion, thus retaining the ideal of a single community, or *umma wahida*, in which none of the members need

make concessions regarding the moral self-sufficiency of the respective religious traditions with which they identify. For Adian Husaini the covenant offers sufficient proof that Islam tolerates other religions, because *Dhimma* status offers adequate protection to non-Muslims living in Muslim territory. Circumventing the issue that the present-day Muslim world can no longer be compared to seventh-century Arabia, he presents a historical overview of the treatment of Jews and heretics in medieval Christendom, in order to conclude that the situation in the Muslim world during that time compares very favorably and that it is therefore worthy of emulation by present-day Muslims.<sup>149</sup>

*Defending freedom of religion and universal human rights standards*

Aside from preserving the plurality of religions and defending minority rights on a domestic level, either through alternative legal drafts or rethinking the theology and ethics underlying interfaith *fiqh*, freedom of religion and belief is also enshrined in international law. In this respect, it is ironic to say the least that in the same year that MUI issued its fatwas against pluralism, liberalism and secularism, Ahmadis and collective interfaith prayers, the Indonesian government ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), article 18 of which safeguards the freedom of religion and belief.<sup>150</sup> This covenant forms part of a broader set of legal instruments evolving out of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to which Indonesia had also become party on the basis of a revision of article 28 on the constitutional guarantee of basic human rights to all citizens.<sup>151</sup>

For some progressive Muslim intellectuals, monitoring the implementation of these commitments has become a key aspect of their work. Because of the government's failure to fulfil this obligation under the international legal framework for human rights, scholar-activists associated with the Wahid Institute, such as Ahmad Suaedy and Rumadi, have assumed responsibility for filing regular status reports on human rights violations and other incidents undermining the freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia.<sup>152</sup> In Suaedy's view, that brief also extends to defending lifestyles that are not immediately associated with religion, but nevertheless fall under the freedom of conviction and thought. This includes, for example, speaking out against the harassment of punks in Aceh as part of the enforcement of *perda syariat*.<sup>153</sup> Aside from their preoccupation with the hands-on activities of monitoring and compil-

ing reports, staff at the Wahid Institute also continue to engage academically with freedom of religion in the context of the country's democratization process and the concern for upholding universal human rights standards. Since 2005, when Ahmad Suaedy and Rumadi started the *Pluralism Watch* research program, the institute has published a number of volumes combining case studies with more theoretical and methodological considerations.<sup>154</sup>

A detailed unpacking of the relationship between Islam, universal human rights standards and the implementation of the relevant legislation is found in another publication by the Wahid Institute, entitled *Islam, the Constitution and Human Rights*. Taking Indonesia's ratification of ICCPR as their point of departure, the authors recognize that the freedom of religion is at one and the same time one of the oldest and most controversial elements in the history of human rights. The latter becomes clear when the covenant is contrasted with alternative formulations of human rights promoted by the Saudi-sponsored Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), such as the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (UIDHR) from 1981 and the 1994 Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI).<sup>155</sup> With the demise of the Cold War following the collapse of the communist bloc, the reservations expressed by Muslim countries towards the ICCPR's article 18 have moved very much into the limelight. These dynamics form part of the age-old tension between universalism and particularism which lies at the root of a general problem: How to create universal human rights standards that cross cultural—in this instance also meaning religious—boundaries and differences. The debate on how to reconcile the underlying principles of the 1948 UDHR and its associated legal instruments with the reservations expressed by Muslim countries in the 1980s and 1990s highlights two issues. First of all, it drives home the realization that often secular arguments do not suffice in justifying the universality of human rights. Secondly, the recognition that these universal human rights standards are the outcome of a global consensus built over decades still leaves unanswered the question as to how the underlying universal principles are to be preserved in particular contexts and under specific circumstances. Whether presented in positive terms, when agreement is reached through a learning process towards mutual appreciation, or in negative ones, whereby unequal relations between traditions enable the stronger one to impose its universalized values on others for the sake of a greater good—each interpretation comes with its own set of challenges.<sup>156</sup>

Suaedy and his colleagues cite Mashood Baderin, a professor of law at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and a UN expert on human rights in Sudan, who suggests resolving these tensions by making a distinction between the universality of human rights as global acceptance of the idea of human rights and universalism as referring to its interpretation and implementation. However, the Wahid Institute also appreciates that this does not change the perception held by many Muslim states that human rights have been defined from a Western perspective. 'The foundation on which Eastern or Southern states reject the Western or Northern versions of human rights universality' is formed by the 'sociological structures and cultural diversity' which in turn are crucial factors in arguing for the 'relativity of human rights'.<sup>157</sup> The researchers at the Wahid Institute are also very much aware of the various drawbacks posed by the three most influential theories providing the analytical frameworks for the international debate on the universality and particularity of human rights. In their view the realistic and radical theories of universalism rely too much on state coercion and narrow-minded certainty of a single truth. This obscures the ability for discerning cultural and religious pluralism as an integral part of the human condition. Meanwhile, the major flaw of the theory favoring cultural relativism is that only too often it is used to condone discrimination or even justify violence. The Wahid Institute team concludes that the UDHR encapsulate a set of values of such a fundamental nature that regardless of the fact that in many cases the UDHR was based on Western experiences, this is not to be read as a Western monopoly; the UDHR was formulated without specific religious justification.<sup>158</sup>

This vantage point forms the authors' premise for resolving the issue of freedom of religion. Although covered in the UDHR and in derivative legal instruments for civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, freedom of religion remains a matter of dispute because of the reservations expressed by Muslim countries in the UDHR and the Cairo Declaration, arguing that these are backed by Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence. While recognizing the existence of different perspectives on human rights and appreciating the importance of the latter's integration into different cultures, to the Wahid Institute it is more important to prove that 'Islam is capable of adapting to a variety of situations without losing its authenticity' than hiding behind doctrine.<sup>159</sup> For this they appeal to the writings of Abdullahi an-Na'im, in



which he cautions against the manipulation of cultural relativism by elites in the Muslim world as an excuse not to recognize the UDHR for their own political reasons. An-Na'im continues by countering that an overwhelming consensus has been built worldwide. It recognizes that universal human rights standards form 'an essential foundation for civilised societies' and that even though its origins are found in Western political philosophy, or more specifically the formulations of the American Bill of Rights, this does not diminish their potential universal validity for all humankind.<sup>160</sup>

Also intellectuals involved with other Indonesian NGOs and think tanks recognize the central importance of upholding universal human rights standards for the protection of freedom of religion, notwithstanding the fact that they are grounded in philosophies of natural law and humanism rooted in the Western tradition.<sup>161</sup> In the *Reorientation of Islamic Renewal*, Budhy Munawar-Rachman insists that:

Even though pluralism as a concept originates from the West, as long as it remains connected to a religious spirit which leads humankind towards just behaviour, as a human rights concept that has already acquired universal standing, we must accept it.<sup>162</sup>

Similarly, the editors of *Non-Apologetic Renewal* support Ulil Abshar-Abdalla and Luthfi Assyauckanie's concrete engagement with interfaith relations, inter-religious marriage, gender equality in the context of universal human rights as part of the involution of Nurcholish Madjid's sweeping renewal thinking.<sup>163</sup>

However, even with such agreement over the general principle that freedom of religion is an integral part of a set of inalienable fundamental human rights, there remains the critical issue of legally unrecognized offshoots from so-called mainstream religions.<sup>164</sup> This is an important matter for the researchers from the Wahid Institute with regard to their efforts at monitoring the treatment of Indonesia's Shi'ites, Ahmadis and smaller splinter groups who base themselves (in part) on Islamic teachings. Of particular relevance here is the distinction between the 'internal' freedom of belief and thought, which encompasses also the choice to convert from one religion to another, and the 'external' freedom of manifesting beliefs in acts of worship, observance and through teaching.<sup>165</sup> In both instances, the protection of community interests is often used to curtail the freedom of religion by declaring certain convictions and practices as deviant and therefore a threat to public order, safety and morality, as well as an excuse to

prohibit or frustrate missionary activities on the grounds of shielding others from proselytization. Given the sensitivity of these matters, one concession made by progressive intellectuals, such as Rumadi and Badrus Samsul Fata, is the substitution of the term 'religious rights' for 'freedom of religion'. According to them, this is a tactical choice which makes it easier to reach out to reactionary Muslims for whom 'freedom of religion' has a very negative connotation.<sup>166</sup>

In order to address the concrete disputes which have erupted in Indonesia since the regime change of 1998, the authors of *Islam, the Constitution, and Human Rights* have taken up ten principles formulated by Dawam Rahardjo in 2006 for the National Commission on Human Rights (*Komnas HAM*). Aside from the very basic individual right to choose and practise a religion, it recognizes the right to convert, or to establish a new religion, as well as the decision not to have a religion at all. It also includes the freedom of the non-coercive and non-violent propagation of religion, but not a right to criticize or insult a religion. This last point touches on the issue of blasphemy, which is (no longer) a criminal offence in many countries, but continues to lead to much controversy worldwide, as evinced by the uproar caused by the cartoons or films featuring the Prophet Muhammad. It is exactly this point that is used by reactionaries such as Adian Husaini to appeal to human rights covenants in order to demand satisfaction over such instances of anti-Islamic behavior, as well as to challenge the right of certain strands of contemporary mystical sects to be recognized as Islamic.<sup>167</sup>

While it is still difficult to propagate atheism in Indonesia, given the restrictions imposed by the Pancasila Doctrine, Rahardjo thinks that this should not prevent people from studying or teaching the work of authors such as Marx, Freud and Feuerbach. The Indonesian government is also bound to treat all religions equally, which means it should permit inter-religious marriage, facilitate freedom of choice in religious education, and refrain from passing legislation that declares certain religions or sects as deviant or misleading, unless there is an acute threat to public order or morality. Although Rahardjo's principles are still very much open to debate, their publication under the auspices of the *Komnas HAM* helps emphasize the importance of a robust and unwavering political commitment to the effective implementation and enforcement of the freedom of religion as an integral part of universal human rights standards.<sup>168</sup>

The implications of such principles in the cultural–religious setting of Muslim countries are especially pertinent to questions of unbelief (*kufr*), heresy (*zandaqa*) and apostasy (*ridda*); charges that are often leveled with an appeal to the principle of protecting religion under the purpose-based approach of *maqasid al-shari'a*, and therefore a valid reason for circumscribing and effectively restricting the freedom of religion. Aside from the tension between jurisprudential rulings pertaining to these charges and the Qur'anic injunction against compulsion in religion and exhortations to respect the religion of others, the authors again rely on Abdullahi an-Na'im, who has argued that in all these cases conceptual unclarity surrounding apostasy and the related charges of heresy, blasphemy and religious hypocrisy actually undermine the legal soundness of jurisprudential rulings based on the Qur'an.<sup>169</sup> The Traditions of the Prophet too are an equally uncertain basis for punishing apostates, either on grounds of the reliability of the *hadith* through which this particular punitive practice has been transmitted, or because other factors than apostasy as such also weighed in on the treatment of transgressors.<sup>170</sup> Echoing Abdullahi an-Na'im, the Australia-based Maldivian scholar of Islam Abdullah Saeed charges that stripping apostates of their civil rights or—even worse—sentencing them to death is generally motivated by political rather than legal considerations.<sup>171</sup>

Since 'the pre-modern view of sanctioning apostates is no longer automatically valid in the reality of nation-states', the discussion of the treatment of lapsed Muslims, heretics and non-Muslims shifts to the issue of citizenship.<sup>172</sup> Suaedy and his team appear to take a much clearer position than the intellectuals who were involved in the Interfaith *Fiqh* project. In contrast to the ambiguity surrounding the latter discussions of tolerating non-Muslims as *Ahl al-Dhimma*, the researchers at the Wahid Institute state univocally that historically the rights of non-Muslims under *Dhimma* were limited and denied them full civil and political rights. However, this does not derive from scripture, but is effectively a result of *fiqh al-siyasa*, the political *fiqh* of the classical age, which divided not only the world in an 'abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and abode of war (*dar al-harb*), but also internally distinguished between Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as between males and females, free men and slaves.<sup>173</sup> Modern society and states, by contrast, are no longer limited to such narrow understanding of religious identity. Consequently, the Wahid Institute concludes that:

[...] pluralism and multiculturalism is an unavoidable reality for all nations, which means that perspectives based purely on the uniformity of the com-

munity are difficult to maintain. Such a condition demands that there be a guarantee for all individuals to live peacefully side by side all over the world. This guarantee is also needed in the Muslim community, considering that Muslims are now spread all over the world, including in non-Muslim majority nations, and live in highly diverse societies. The reality in Islamic states themselves is one of diversity and multiculturalism.<sup>174</sup>

For contemporary Muslims the institution of *Dhimma* has therefore become untenable and among progressives the discussion about non-Muslims in their societies has now become one of citizenship, which focuses on a sense of communal belonging grounded in human rights. Aside from dropping *Dhimmi* status altogether, religious scholars from the NU advocate replacing the *dar al-Islam/harb* binary with the alternative *dar al-Salam*—Abode of Peace. The Wahid Institute's insistence on managing this transition 'through a methodologically sound and politically constant reformation of Islam so as to firmly root universal human rights principles in Islamic doctrine' reflects its parent organization's reformulation of *Aswaja* as a *manhaj* (method) of perpetual *ijtihad*.<sup>175</sup> It provides another instance of Muslim activists and intellectuals from traditionalist Islamic backgrounds being in the forefront of promoting a progressive Islamic discourse in the realm of human rights.

Considering the difficulty of finding definitive and firm answers to the question whether religion and religiosity are a 'private-individual problem or a collective-communal issue', and given the discrepancy between the UDHR's interpretation of freedom of religion and Islamic understandings of this principle, as well as 'mass sentiment, the attitudes of MUI and the Department of Religious Affairs, and the weakness of the state apparatus' in dealing with religious pluralism, the Wahid Institute decided to formulate a set of recommendations demonstrating resolve and vision.<sup>176</sup> These consist of an appeal to the government to fast-track the implementation of article 18 of the ICCPR as part of Indonesia's Human Rights National Action Plan and increase the government's awareness of its duties and role in guaranteeing and protecting citizens' rights to religious freedom. To make this succeed, the government's self-confidence, in particular that of its law enforcement apparatus, needs to be improved too. This must start by stimulating a more proactive and assertive attitude on the part of the government rather than the current practice of deferring to MUI and using its fatwas as a vindication for action and non-action. In view of MUI's involvement in a number of violations of article 18 and attempts to monopolize the interpretation of what constitutes Islamic doctrine and

what must be considered as deviations, the institute also appealed to the government to reconsider the role of the Ulama Council. Finally, the government must encourage the Islamic higher education sector to produce coursework materials suitable for all levels of teaching, specifically addressing freedom of religion and belief. It should also motivate the Islamic mass organizations to support the implementation of article 18 of the ICCPR. These last two points clearly show the interconnectedness of freedom of religion, human rights and education against the general background of the concept of pluralism.

### *Islamic higher education as an area of contestation*

The nexus between pluralism and liberalism connects religious rights and freedom of thought not only with the international legal context of universal human rights standards, but provides also an interface with developments in the academic study and research of religion. This view is rooted in the reforms of the state Islamic education system implemented in the early 1970s during Abdul Mukti Ali's term in office as Minister of Religious Affairs. The first Indonesian scholar to obtain a degree in comparative religion from McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies, Mukti Ali was also the first to see the relevance of this academic field for a religiously diverse country like Indonesia.<sup>177</sup>

Further inspiration for the continuous rethinking of Islamic education is offered by the diary of Mukti Ali's protégé, Ahmad Wahib. As his ideas gained wider currency following publication in 1981, they were found to dovetail nicely with important transformations in the study of Islam as a field of scholarly inquiry and the teaching of Islamic studies in Indonesian higher education.<sup>178</sup> The editors of *Non-Apologetic Renewal* have used their introduction to highlight another sea change that is taking place in this field as the first postcolonial generation of Muslim intellectuals is gradually bowing out and being replaced by younger academics, writers and activists facing the challenge of translating the sweeping ideas introduced by their predecessors into concrete research agendas and education programs.

With religious pluralism and its relation to social-economic issues at the top of the agenda, the study of Islam through theological, philosophical and especially hermeneutical approaches is now increasingly complemented by methodologies from the social sciences in order to account for the dynamics of historical realities which have shaped

Muslim attitudes towards society. The post-Madjid–Wahib generation of Muslim intellectuals associated with the Ciputat School, represented by figures such as Azyumardi Azra, Bahtiar Effendy, Saiful Mujani and Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, are among the pioneers of what I suggest calling the new matrix of Islamic Studies. Their advocacy of the two key themes—stimulating social–economic development and stemming anti-pluralist sentiments—are based on academic analyses using comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approaches drawing on traditional Islamic disciplines, modern hermeneutics and the social sciences.<sup>179</sup> In a similar vein, members of the Jogja or Sapen School are developing their own alternative forms of scholarship, which are more philosophical in orientation and part of a research agenda geared towards the improvement of inter-religious relations within Indonesian society.

### *Developing an Islamic philosophy of education*

A team of educationists led by Amin Abdullah considered the 2004 transformation of Yogyakarta’s IAIN Sunan Kalijaga into a full university—Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN)—an opportune moment for introducing a new philosophy of education geared towards giving it a wider mandate in providing its future graduates with solid academic, innovative and leadership abilities.<sup>180</sup> Inspired by the pioneering work of Fazlur Rahman and Mohammed Arkoun, the new proposal envisages a comprehensive approach to the study of religions as an open and interdisciplinary field, which looks at Islam as a living religion.<sup>181</sup> It seeks to examine Islam through a civilizational lens by using both traditional religious and modern secular disciplines in combination with an ethical–philosophical approach that does not pretend to be value-free. In fact, its expansive view of education (*pendidikan*) wants to take the study of Islam beyond the conventional view of teaching (*palajaran*) as merely a transfer of knowledge. It also wants to pass on methodologies and values that will stimulate and equip its graduates with the tools for meeting the challenge of ‘learning to live together’ with Indonesians from other faiths.<sup>182</sup> In a globally interconnected world, and all the more so in an ethnically and religiously diverse society like Indonesia’s, the knowledge and skills that can be imparted through such a program are absolutely vital.<sup>183</sup>

The newly proposed curriculum is grounded in an ‘integrative–inter-connective’ philosophical approach to the study of religion in higher

education. The brainchild of Amin Abdullah, who served as rector of IAIN/UIN Sunan Kalijaga during its transition phase from state Islamic institute to full university status, the main goal of this undertaking is to transcend the self-sufficiency of academic disciplines which can easily lead to narrow-mindedness and fanatic particularism. The initiative also tries to resolve the epistemological dichotomy between Indonesia's general and religious education systems, evinced by the bureaucratic split of responsibility between the Ministries of Education and Religious Affairs respectively. Finally, in terms of ethical-philosophical engagement, there is the axiological aim of offering a new worldview to both religious scholars and scientists.<sup>184</sup>

Amin Abdullah built on his research from the early 1990s in *The Study of Religion; Normativity or Historicity?* to examine the tension between approaches.<sup>185</sup> This was followed by *Islamic Studies in Higher Education: An Integrative-Interconnective Approach* which forms a condensation of more than ten years of subsequent academic-philosophical thinking about epistemology and pedagogy. It presents a new paradigm that seeks to salvage the core values associated with the 'normative-sacral aspect of religiosity', while also profiting academically from the scholarly merits of the 'historical-profane domain', by identifying the interconnectivities between these two approaches. In order to establish the project's viability, as an academic philosopher Abdullah raises the question whether this means that contemporary Islamic philosophy has to come to terms with its Western counterpart, and if so 'how to articulate that struggle and dialogue between these two systems of thought in a conceptual manner that is intelligible within the context of philosophy itself not that of practical-political ideology'.<sup>186</sup> This particular focus is also motivated by the fact that, within the IAINs and UINs, the academic study of philosophy is embedded in the faculty of *Ushuluddin* (Foundations of Religion), distinguishing it from the applied use of philosophy in the faculties of theology, law, education, history or *da'wa*. What makes this task challenging is the lack of in-depth knowledge among academics working in Indonesia's Islamic higher education system of either Islamic or Western philosophy, as well as an equally widespread unawareness of the substantial progress made in historical-empirical examinations of the Muslim world's intellectual heritage. This unfamiliarity manifests itself in a lack of appreciation for the often radically new image that these advances present of Islamic civilization, and which are therefore

often interpreted in terms of '*al-ghazwu al-fikry*', making it difficult to change the resulting 'reactive–defensive–emotional' response into a 'proactive–conceptual–argumentative' one.<sup>187</sup>

To correct this situation, Abdullah's new research agenda will have to cover metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, corresponding to the philosophical sub-fields of Ibn Sina's constituent ideas of God, World and Man, or what Kant called the three foundational questions of philosophy: What may we believe? What can we know? What must we do? These philosophical concerns can in turn be matched to the three areas of Amin Abdullah's integrative–interconnective approach to the study of Islam as a civilization, which was pioneered by heritage thinkers such as Arkoun, al-Jabiri and Abu Zayd. First, Amin Abdullah distinguishes a civilization of text (*peradaban teks* or *hadara al-nass* in Arabic), which has resulted in a culture of religious sciences grounded in scripture. Then there is the civilization of science (*peradaban ilmun* or *hadara al-'ilm*) representing a culture of factual–historical–empirical knowledge drawing on the natural and social sciences. Finally, he identifies a civilization of philosophy (*peradaban falsafa* or *hadara al-falsafa*) which is the product of a research culture of critical–ethical–philosophical examination.<sup>188</sup> In terms of academic–philosophic debates, Abdullah's particular breakdown also reflects the domains of the practice of knowing and understanding, scientific theory, and critical analysis. The latter has the potential for functioning as a meta-discourse as it interrogates the theoretical foundations used by *ulama* and scientists alike, thus putting different disciplines into conversation with each other.

Although Amin Abdullah draws predominantly from the triptych of the *bayani*, *burhani* and *irfani* epistemes which Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri had developed in his *Critique of Arab Reason*, this type of critical study had actually already started with Fazlur Rahman and Arkoun. They were among the first to examine Islam through the lens of religious studies as an interdisciplinary field of academic investigation.<sup>189</sup> The closely related question of the relation between rationality and historicity in Islamic thinking has been further explored by, among others, Muhammad Shahrur, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Abdullahi an-Na'im.<sup>190</sup> All these critical Muslim scholars are using the advances made in various disciplines from the human sciences (including 'new' specialisms such as structural linguistics, hermeneutics, semiotics and cultural studies) and transplanting them to their own fields of expertise. As a caveat, Amin Abdullah quotes from the foreword to a post-



humorous publication of Fazlur Rahman written by the South African scholar of Islam Ebrahim Moosa:

[...] that does not mean that scholars of religion must become economists or political scientists. However, the study of religion will suffer if its insights do not take cognizance of how discourses of politics, economics, and culture impact on the performance of religion and vice-versa.<sup>191</sup>

In terms of complexity and sophistication, these critical approaches cover a similar domain to the philosophy of science, and it is for that reason that Amin Abdullah proposes something that has not been tried before in Islamic studies. He suggests applying the findings of leading philosophers of science, such as Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos, to the study of Islam. Amin Abdullah considers the latter particularly relevant because of the latter's attempt to formulate an alternative that navigates between the falsification process outlined by Popper and Kuhn's paradigm shift, calling it a 'progressive research programme'.<sup>192</sup> Because Kuhn also attached importance to contexts of discovery and justification of sciences and theories, while Lakatos included a dialectical historiographical meta-method to explain scientific revolutions in his research program, I suggest that their work is not limited to a pure philosophy of science, but also contains an intellectual historical component.<sup>193</sup> In view of Amin Abdullah's ambition to apply Lakatos' terminology to the historical development of traditional Islamic learning in order to determine its scientific rigor, while at the same keeping a vested interest in the normativity of Islam's doctrine, the resulting shift from foundationalism to holism forms the key characteristic of the integrative–interconnective approach to Islamic studies. Amin Abdullah's work offers a relevant example of how the secular vocations of intellectuals can also blur the lines between their roles as interpreters and legislators.

The distinctive aspect of Lakatos' research program is that it consists of a 'hard core', which can be taken to correspond to Kuhn's paradigm, and a 'protective belt' of auxiliary hypotheses meant to defend the core from being challenged and undermined—or from being falsified, as Popper would call it.<sup>194</sup> Transposing these concepts of the philosophy of science to Islamic studies, Amin Abdullah suggests that the field's core parallels 'normative Islam' defined on the basis of a body of texts transmitted by traditional Islamic learning, while 'historical Islam' forms the domain of the protective belt provided by theoretical–empirical sciences.<sup>195</sup> The conflation of normative and historical Islam

hampers a critical study of Islam, as a result of which the disciplines of traditional Islamic learning have become sacralized alongside the sacred texts themselves.<sup>196</sup> Amin Abdullah agrees with the diagnosis of Fazlur Rahman and Mohammed Arkoun that this is an undesirable situation: scientific theories operate in a different epistemological realm from normativity and therefore cannot be used to guarantee doctrines' truths. Unlike the ahistorical pretence of religious dogma, it is now generally accepted that scientific theories are not developed in a vacuum, but determined by interests, assumptions and a research context that is inexorably tied up with concrete social-historical conditions. This also means that philosophy of science, sociology of knowledge and intellectual historiography are interconnected academic fields. With a nod to Karl Mannheim and Max Scheler, Amin Abdullah says that both human existence and knowledge are situated in a historical and social continuum. This means that the Islamic sciences must also be regarded as human, social and cultural products.<sup>197</sup>

In terms of Lakatos' research program, it is thus only possible to reconstruct the historical realm of Islamic learning on the empirical-theoretical level, not normative Islam on the dogmatic text level.<sup>198</sup> Therefore Abdullah proposes to consolidate the disciplines from the humanities and social sciences, which religious scholars have been using to loosen the protective belt around Islamic doctrine, and develop a proper Islamic philosophy of sciences.<sup>199</sup> A new way of doing Islamic studies on the basis of the findings of the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge requires a new research program combining linguistic-historical, philosophical-theological and sociological-anthropological approaches. The interaction between these approaches also needs a new language for creating the circular dynamics which is in essence a hermeneutics capable of falsifying and correcting the Islamic sciences and formulating a new theoretical paradigm by prioritizing the context of discovery and minimizing the context of justification.<sup>200</sup>

This is Amin Abdullah's plan as far as a methodology and research agenda for a philosophy of Islamic sciences goes, but—as mentioned at the beginning—the aim of this new way of studying Islam is not just epistemological but also axiological: 'To help find the *fundamental value* lying behind the formulation of [Islam's] formal and dry doctrine'.<sup>201</sup> The main challenge of this comprehensive research program is how to reconcile the disciplines of traditional Islamic learning representing religious knowledge with truths claims that have what

Abdullah calls an ‘absolutely absolute’ pretence (*ta‘abbudi* or *qat’i*, Arabic–Islamic jargon), and the ‘absolutely relative’ (*ta‘aqquli*, *zanni*) scepticism of the modern humanities and social sciences, which produce knowledge *about* religion(s) by taking them as social phenomena and disregarding the esoteric–exoteric dualism. This lack of appreciation for the spiritual aspects of religiosity which inform the Islamic value system must be offset by an alternative approach more suitable for the present-day age of pluralism and its simultaneous acceptance of a multitude of ‘absolutely absolute’ truth claims. Navigating between extreme absolutes and relativities, the outcome of Abdullah’s negotiation between religious sciences on the one hand and the human sciences on the other is the ‘relatively absolute’ approach.<sup>202</sup> Transcending the bipolarity or dichotomy of religion and science as two separate entities with their own formal–material concerns, research methodologies, criteria for truth or validity, and function entails finding a new foundation for the epistemological unity of religious and positivist–secular knowledge in what Abdullah refers to as an *Etika Tauhidik*—an ‘Ethics grounded in Transcendent Unity’.<sup>203</sup>

Amin Abdullah admits that his alternative ‘theoanthropocentric–integralistic’ approach is inspired by Kuntowijoyo’s contextual examination of religion. To that end, he even borrows the latter’s term ‘prophetic social sciences’.<sup>204</sup> Because of its underlying holism, the religious background of particular types of knowledge should not be an issue—it doesn’t matter that early optics and algebra were developed by Muslims; that mechanics and astrophysics find their origins in Judeo-Christian culture; or that acupuncture and yoga come from China and India—what matters is whether it works for the greater good.<sup>205</sup> The axiological objective of this envisaged rapprochement between different epistemes lies in the reintegration of knowledge for the sake of enabling humankind to exercise its responsibility as God’s viceregent on earth. The required ‘dedifferentiation’ of religion and other aspects of human existence, including the acquisition of knowledge, is put in the same jargon we have seen used in the previous chapter by theorists of *maqasid al-shari‘a*, in order to demonstrate that its religious categories can also function as ‘a yardstick for epistemological truth claims (*dharuriyyat*: true–false); knowledge production (*hajiyyat*: good–bad); and objectives of knowledge (*tahsiniyyat*: beneficial–harmful)’.<sup>206</sup> For the same reasons, Amin Abdullah also asserts that there is no need to adopt the categories of rationalism, empiricism and pragmatism, as they have evolved in Western philosophy of science, because:

The debate, struggle and attention of scholarly epistemology in the West is more concerned with the domain of the natural sciences and to some extent the humanities and social sciences, while Islamic Studies and *Ulumuddin* [religious sciences], especially shari'a, *aqida* [faith], Sufism, Qur'an and Hadith studies, lie within the realm of the classical humanities. Therefore, the epistemological analytic framework needs to be specifically equipped for Islamic thinking, that is to say, what Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri refers to as the *Bayani*, *Irfani* and *Burhani* epistemologies.<sup>207</sup>

Together these three epistemes provide the structure for transforming contemporary multidisciplinary Islamic studies into a twenty-first-century version of al-Ghazali's equally comprehensive approach to conventional eleventh-century religious sciences; creating a dialogue between the two in order to 'humanize' Islamic learning rather than 'Islamize' knowledge.<sup>208</sup> The triangulation of discursive, illuminationist and demonstrative reason connecting the domains of textual–normative and contextual–historical–empirical analyses thus establishes the circularity which defines the desired dynamical hermeneutics of Abdullah's integrative–interconnective approach.<sup>209</sup> His junior colleague Mahmud Arif, author of *Transformative Islamic Education*, provides a densely formulated summary of this new paradigm:

The epistemology of Islamic education as a conceptual matrix of cultural-performative activity must be developed on the basis of a threefold-complementary connectivity (*takamuliyya*) between three epistemic systems: *bayani*, *irfani*, *burhani*, within a dynamic pyramid-shaped hierarchy that stands in a dialectic relationship to the dimension of 'natural' reality, as well as 'revelatory' reality. Such intertwining connections can be made functional through *ijtihad-tajdid* or 'interpretative renewal'. From an ideological perspective, Islamic education is inclined towards greater awareness and empowerment within a framework of humanization, liberation and transcendence. From an epistemological angle, it appreciates and energizes the three interconnected sources of knowledge: the senses, intellect, and revelation (intuition) in order to explore and react to the accelerated dynamics and diversity of empirical reality so that Islamic education cannot be considered as a final and exclusive product. The earlier mentioned three-fold complementary connectivity can restore the holistic and integralistic character of Islamic education.<sup>210</sup>

If we follow Amin Abdullah in adopting the terminology of Imre Lakatos as the point of departure for an alternative philosophy of the Islamic sciences, then Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri's epistemological taxonomy can be said to function as the hard core for this new progressive research program. The protective belt is provided by Abdullah's

reliance on other contributions to the critical examination of the intellectual heritage of Islam as a civilization by Muslim scholars such as Fazlur Rahman, Mohammed Arkoun, Hasan Hanafi, Muhammad Shahrur, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Abdullahi an-Na'im, Khalid Abou el Fadl, Farid Esack and Ebrahim Moosa.

As part of the same transformative exercise, another scholar from UIN Yogyakarta—Abdul Rachman Assegaf (b.1964)—uses the fundamental philosophical and agenda-setting work of Amin Abdullah to develop an Islamic philosophy of education. Replicating the same domains of religious sciences (*hadara al-nass*), scientific knowledge (*hadara al-'ilm*) and critical analysis (*hadara al-falsafa*), which together compose the field of Islamic studies, Assegaf's applied philosophy responds to another set of more concrete challenges faced by Indonesia's Muslim community: a lack of vision. This concerns questions of how to deal with individual piety and technological backwardness in the domain of education; the epistemological problem of the dichotomy between religious and rational sciences; and the closely related issue of the dominance of normative-deductive thinking in Islam. Given the particular nature of the shortcomings identified by this diagnosis, Assegaf draws on the work of the leading American philosopher of pragmatism and education, John Dewey (1859–1952), and the British-educated Egyptian philosopher and linguist Muhammad 'Atiya al-Abrashi (1897–1981).

John Dewey's advocacy of progressive education is the outcome of a confluence of philosophical pragmatism stimulated by the writings of Charles Pierce and William James, functional psychology and political liberalism.<sup>211</sup> According to Assegaf, there is not necessarily an irreconcilable conflict between Islam and the premises of John Dewey's thinking, which takes liberal individualism and humankind's rationality and social-centrism as its point of departure. However, Assegaf agrees with Abdullah that the anthropo-secular assumptions of pragmatism—according to which humans are regarded as progressive-active creatures shaped in interaction with society and culture—leave no room for an ethical-religious dimension.<sup>212</sup> Although Dewey did not reject religiosity per se, his formulation of a moral framework failed to take it into account because it relies primarily on the innate human capacity for problem-solving abilities.<sup>213</sup> This is where the work of al-Abrashi complements Dewey's lack of attention for the religious. Stressing the dual nature of humankind, consisting in its bodily and

spiritual aspects, Assegaf's opens up the philosophical possibility to add a transcendental dimension to Dewey's pragmatism, which considers humanity's innate natural abilities a sufficient ground for his progressive education.

Al-Abrashi too presents humankind as *homo educabile*—‘the human who can be educated’. However, he sees this manifested in *fitra*, the human disposition towards belief in the Transcendent, which is necessary to fulfil the function of *khalifa fi'l-ard*, or viceregent on earth.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, created free, no human is forced into a religion; the Qur'an recognizes humankind as a rational creature, and similarly as a social and progressive-active being capable of self-development. Finally, thanks to its ethical-religious disposition, humankind self-identifies as a creation of God. Thus the Islamic perspective of humanist philosophy strikes a balance between theocentrism and anthropocentrism.<sup>215</sup> These qualities bestow an inherent dignity on human nature, which is not animalist but superior in origin, characterized by a physical-spiritual duality endowed with intelligence and obliged to restrain its basic impulses in order to assume the human responsibility of viceregency.<sup>216</sup> This Islamic notion of human dignity and educability has an affinity with basic human rights, creating an obligation for Muslim pedagogues to ‘humanize’ Islamic education in order for it to become ‘the key to the internalization of human rights values’.<sup>217</sup> This, in turn, requires education professionals who are capable of transmitting both the revealed and acquired knowledge through which a ‘*tauhidik*’, theocentric and anthropocentric education is implemented.<sup>218</sup> Aside from the model represented by the Prophet, echoing his colleague Amin Abdullah, Abdul Rachman Assegaf too takes the comprehensive scholarship of the classical figure of al-Ghazali as an approximation of the ethical code of the ideal Islamic teacher.<sup>219</sup>

However, as an academic specializing in the applied field of the philosophy of education, Assegaf also has to deal with the practicalities of transposing these ethical-philosophical fundamentals to the domains of religious knowledge (*hadara al-nass*) and knowledge about religion (*hadar al-'ilm*). In regard to the former, this poses the challenge of instilling the religious sciences with a visionary education that shapes this human stewardship on earth as an emulation of the figure of the *insan kamil* or perfect man modeled after the Prophet.<sup>220</sup> In practical terms, Assegaf takes his cue from Benjamin Bloom's representation of progressive education as a continuous cycle. He suggests that Bloom's

taxonomy, distinguishing the cognitive, psycho-motoric, emotional-spiritual and affective aspects of learning, can be related to the Islamic categories of *ilmu* (knowledge), *amal* (action), *iman* (faith) and *akhlaq* (functional values) respectively.<sup>221</sup> As for the domain of knowledge about religion, Assegaf translates religious knowledge and critical reflection into an agenda for integrative-interconnective approaches to research-based knowledge of contemporary issues that need to be addressed in Islamic education. As a representative of UIN Yogyakarta and the team led by Amin Abdullah, who has been a member of the Muhammadiyah's Council of Religious Rulings and the Furtherance of Islamic Thought (MTPPI), it is not surprising that this agenda includes items such as the democratization of education, multiculturalism, peace, globalization and anti-corruption.<sup>222</sup>

## *The reactionary rejection of liberal Islamic education*

None of the arguments used for promoting this new holistic approach to Islamic studies sounds convincing to Adian Husaini. In his polemical *The Virus of Liberalism in Islamic Higher Education*, he lumps together all forms of critical engagement with the Islamic heritage under the header 'liberal Islam'; charging that its influence on teaching and learning forms the single most dangerous threat to Indonesia's Muslim community.<sup>223</sup> Liberalism is used here as an umbrella term for all kinds of undesirable trends and strands of thought, including the advocacy of pluralism, relativism, perennialism and multiculturalism. Thus *The Virus of Liberalism* contains many of the same accusations leveled against the progressive bloc as his earlier mentioned book, which presents religious pluralism as the enemy of established religions. However, in this instance the author focuses on the tendency among academics associated with the country's state Islamic education network of IAINs and UINs to slip these objectionable concepts into the religious education curriculum.

The heading 'perennialism' is used to list his objections against a variety of approaches to the study of religions. Husaini criticizes Azyumardi Azra for his sympathetic view of *The Great Transformation*, the popular book in which Karen Armstrong traces the common origins of human religiosity and the subsequent emergence of the great world religions. He claims there is a paradox between the idea of an eternal truth and Armstrong's representation of all religious traditions

as products of history. Komaruddin Hidayat, Azra's colleague and successor as rector of Jakarta's UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, is taken to task for his positive depiction of Perennialism. Husaini disagrees with Hidayat's claim in *Future Religion: The Perspective of Perennial Philosophy*, that the negative impact of exclusivist truth claims is not limited to the other religions which are rejected, but that the underlying 'theological arrogance' is also detrimental to the religion making such claims.<sup>224</sup> Instead, Adian Husaini paints an alternative and very dubious picture of Perennialism—featuring the Theosophists; the writer Aldous Huxley, grandson of the evolutionist Thomas Huxley and an experimenter with mind-altering drugs; René Guénon, a French Catholic who allegedly converted to Islam but also dabbled in freemasonry; and Swiss-born Frithjof Schuon, a critic of modernity and promoter of the idea of a quintessential esoterism.

Similarly, 'multiculturalism' is used to condemn writings such as *Multicultural Piety*. This book by Munir Mulkhan, a professor at UIN Yogyakarta, contains a chapter entitled 'From a Theology of Violence to a Theology of Hope', in which the author argues that normative Islam consists in caring for humankind rather than the performance of rituals.<sup>225</sup> Husaini dismisses that argument because Islam does not distinguish between individual and social piety, accusing Mulkhan of misinterpreting the notion of *tawhid* and even castigating the Muhammadiyah for allowing him to pass his 'fantasies' as representative of that organization.<sup>226</sup> Even the use of the term *Islam Inklusif* is rejected because it claims that Islamic normativity has gradually evolved, instead of having been instantaneously revealed in full force; for Adian Husaini there exists only 'Islam' without adjectives.<sup>227</sup>

The main culprits of what Husaini considers a betrayal of the IAINs' founding mission are the intellectuals who received their academic formation at McGill University in Canada, beginning with Abdul Mukti Ali and Harun Nasution. Their erroneous ways of studying Islam are perpetuated by those following in their footsteps, including M. Amin Abdullah. To Husaini they are guilty of undermining the objectives of the founders of Indonesia's state-sponsored Islamic education system by promoting the historicized approach to the study of religions imported from Wilfred Cantwell Smith's Institute of Islamic Studies, which depicts Islam as an evolving religion like any other, or by introducing other aberrations, such as Amin Abdullah's 'humanization' of Islamic knowledge.<sup>228</sup> He pitches those subscribing to Nasution's prop-



agation of Mu'tazili thought or Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana's view that Ibn Rushd's philosophy could have guided the Muslims to modernity, not to mention the adoption of (in his eyes) the idiosyncratic methods for studying Islam put forward by the likes of Abu Zayd and Arkoun, against those who respect the richness of orthodoxy from Islam's Golden Age, culminating in the oeuvre of al-Ghazali.<sup>229</sup>

To support these allegations, Husaini harks back to his earlier writings on the subject which are suffused with visions of anti-Muslim conspiracies also affecting the domain of scholarship on Islam, as becomes evident from titles such as *The Hegemony of the Christian West in the Study of Islam in Higher Education*.<sup>230</sup> The (in his view) Western-inspired reforms of the IAIN's curriculum and research methodologies of its faculties designed and implemented under the direction of Mukti Ali and Harun Nasution, and later continued by Amin Abdullah, stand in stark contrast to the anti-colonial stance of Muslim leaders of the early years of independence, like Hatta and Natsir, or the assertive attitudes displayed by former Ministers of Religion and K. H. M. Dachlan (1909–77) and M. Wahib Wahab (1918–86) in defending the integrity of normative Islam. These officials regarded the state Islamic education system that eventually evolved into the countrywide network of IAINs as an important tool for the emancipation of Indonesia's Muslim community by inculcating Islamic values. Instead, since the 1970s, the pragmatism informing the supposedly neutral or value-free approach developed by Mukti Ali and Nasution has become the dominant discourse in the state-sponsored Islamic education system. The only viable counterforce against this trend is formed by the network of *tarbiya* circles and a number of private institutions of higher Islamic learning established with the support of Natsir's DDII and international contacts.<sup>231</sup>

Husaini alleges that the reformed UINs and IAINs do not draw students who are interested in pursuing religious knowledge and are motivated by Islamic ideals, but only those who want a degree in order to improve their job prospects.<sup>232</sup> It produces a very different kind of Muslim intellectual from the traditional religious scholars or *ulama* who—as Heirs of the Prophet—combine erudition with an equally high level of *taqwa* or God consciousness.<sup>233</sup> In an evident attempt to call into question the very character of these new Muslim intellectuals, Husaini invokes Paul Johnson's book *Intellectuals*, which contains descriptions of the eccentricities and—in Husaini's assessment—dubious morals of figures such as Rousseau, Marx, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Hemingway,

Russell and Sartre.<sup>234</sup> The mention of these individuals works as a thinly-veiled allusion to the danger of importing Western academic mores. Even more worrying to Husaini, the graduates from the tertiary Islamic education system carry with them the 'liberal virus' transmitted by its academics, spreading it further into the wider Muslim community as they become teachers themselves or join Islamic NGOs which are often also exposed to the further contamination by foreign counterparts, financial donors and Western media.<sup>235</sup> To highlight the conspiratory atmosphere, which is poisoning Islamic scholarship in these institutions, Husaini cites a report of a survey conducted in 2008 by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society at UIN Jakarta (PPIM-UIN), which showed that the majority of teachers still held—in the view of the researchers—'conservative' or 'radical' religious views, resulting in a renewed and concerted effort to infuse more money into the 'liberalization of Islamic education project', as part of Indonesia's new US-friendly foreign policy.<sup>236</sup>

Consequently, these Muslim intellectuals are pushed to become more interested in engaging with human rights issues, pluralism, democratization and gender issues than the in-depth study of traditional Islamic learning. As examples, Adian Husaini cites a book entitled *A New Paradigm for Islamic Education*, written by a group of Indonesian McGill alumni, and the report on the implementation of the IAIN Indonesia Social Equity Project (IISEP), which ran from 2002 to 2007.<sup>237</sup> His main objection against this new approach is that it reads the Qur'an and Sunna through the lens of pluralism, gender equality and other Western preoccupations, instead of the other way around, which would enable them to see 'how modern Western concepts arising from the social-cultural construct of the West appear through an Islamic lens'.<sup>238</sup> Singling out the issue of women's rights, Adian Husaini finds it ironic that the UIN's Centre for Women's Studies (*Pusat Studi Wanita*, PSW UIN) rejects the universal validity of Islamic law because it is regarded as the historical product of religious thinking developed within a specific social construction, while simultaneously presenting gender equality as a universal concept of eternal validity and therefore not susceptible to change.<sup>239</sup> Tracing the genealogy of this notion, Husaini certainly has a point to present it as a historical product of the social-cultural experience of the modern West wresting itself free from the misogyny characterizing its earlier Hellenic-Judeo-Christian origins, but then he goes on to undermine

his own argumentation by holding on to his exclusivist view of Islam as a divinely revealed religion, which is by definition ahistorical and therefore qualitatively different from the others as evolving religions. Therefore, Husaini dismisses such efforts as the feminist rereading of the Qur'an by Amina Wadud, an African-American convert to Islam, shedding a negative light on her 'relativist *tafsir*' by contrasting it with the (in his view) more faithful interpretations of Muhammad Asad (an Austrian Jewish convert) and the Malaysian scholar Seyyed Naguib al-Attas, who see a categorical difference between the West's anti-religious materialist-relativism and a genuine Islamic worldview.<sup>240</sup>

*Closing observation: convergence and divergence*

In spite of the acrimony characterizing the polarized debates between progressive and reactionary Muslims, and notwithstanding the divergent views they have of the desirability of religious pluralism, both blocs draw on the same theologies of religions developed by Christian theologians and philosophers of religion to undergird their respective interpretations. Whereas progressive intellectuals and activists side with the uncompromising religious pluralism formulated by the likes of Paul Knitter, their reactionary critics draw on the same material to point at the dangers of what they consider the resulting nihilist relativism. In this regard, polemicists such as Adian Husaini find unexpected and unlikely allies in Christian participants in Indonesian interfaith initiatives, such as the Catholic priest Franz Magnis-Suseno, whose ecumenical thinking can also not be divorced from a certain inclusivist tendency that also remains detectable in the religious pluralism of Nurcholish Madjid and his disciples.

Similarly, both camps also consider the academic study of Islam and the Islamic tertiary education system as the key battleground for the dissemination of religious pluralism. Whereas the progressives advocate an integrative-interconnective system of religious thinking which combines a critical examination of the Islamic heritage with commitment to the ethical underpinnings of Islamic learning, their reactionary opponents qualify this approach as a dangerous liberal trend that will undermine the integrity of Islamic teachings and erode the faith of Indonesia's Muslim community.



## CONCLUSION

### SECULARITY AND TOLERATION, LIBERTY AND FREETHINKING

MUI's fatwa on pluralism, secularism and liberalism was issued seven years after regime change, an important milestone for democratization processes as they move from transition into the consolidation phase. It also came on the back of a steady erosion of voter support for Muslim parties in three successive elections, making the extra-parliamentary domain all the more important as the site for debating the place of religion in Indonesian public life, and the role of Islamic ideas and values. The release of the fatwa also coincided with a conservative turn in the country's largest modernist and traditionalist Muslim mass organizations. Thus Fatwa 7 of July 2005 provides both a motive and a motif for examining the ways in which today's Indonesian Muslim intellectuals engage with the contested notions of pluralism, secularism and liberalism. What this book has tried to show is that these concepts are not just open to multiple interpretations, but have even proven to be quite elusive.

The often acrimonious tone of the debates on these issues is not to be solely attributed to opposing intellectual viewpoints on how religion can or must function in public life. Politics too has contributed to the religious tensions in today's Indonesia. Both progressive and reactionary Muslim intellectuals are frustrated by two things: First of all, the resilience of Indonesia's elite and its ability to manipulate the political process for their own interests. Although, for the last fifteen years, Indonesia has been formally implementing a democratization process on the basis

of a state ideology that appears to be carried broadly by society, the same parties—and often the same individuals—from previous regimes continue to dominate and determine politics. A second consideration is the lack of clarity and direction in the political course plotted during the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Especially in regard to religious issues, the administration's policy-making has been ambiguous and the attitude of law enforcement in cases of religious violence is often hesitant. Although the SBY administration was given an even larger electoral mandate in its second term, his ten years in office must be qualified as a period of missed opportunities.

The polarization of debates among Muslims in today's Indonesia on the place of religion in their country can also in part be attributed to the problematic choice of terminology hinted at earlier. The use of 'isms' such as secularism, pluralism and liberalism carries not only a high ideological charge; these words also do not always accurately reflect what the debates are really about. Intra-Muslim antagonism and polarized debates on secularism, pluralism and liberalism reflect a divide between those who take the individual as the starting point of their argumentation and those who approach these concepts from a communitarian point of view. The challenge of finding accurate descriptions applies not only to the issues at hand, but is also true for the categories used to classify the different trends in contemporary Muslim thinking in Indonesia, and the intellectuals who formulate them.

Islamic traditionalism and modernism as represented by the two largest Muslim mass organizations in the world are not static: Both those who articulate the pertaining strands of thought in present-day Indonesia and those studying them feel a constant need to introduce new sub-categories to capture the increasingly subtle differentiation within these discourses. Thus we see the emergence of designations such as Islamic neo-modernism and Islamic post-traditionalism. Applying other alternatives, such as 'liberal' and 'moderate' Islam, remains very contentious and ambiguous. Leaving aside the objections of Muslims to the term 'moderate' because of its connotation of being not fully committed to Islam, in the eyes of different beholders it can be regarded as either a conservative or a progressive attitude. Similarly, the term 'liberal' calls up associations with the political-economic doctrines of both classical and neoliberalism developed by European and North American political and economic theorists. However, the foregoing discussions evince that, in the context of contemporary Islamic

## CONCLUSION

intellectualism, liberal and liberalism is used by its proponents as shorthand for a critical engagement with the Islamic heritage and for the advocacy of a set of civic liberties or freedoms protected under universal human rights standards. These also encompass the freedom of belief and conviction, which are in part inspired by a historical tradition of freethinking, but also a philosophy of natural law with religious undertones. Opponents of this critical Islamic discourse use the term 'liberal' in a derogatory way to refer to the introduction of elements that are alien to Islam; a *ghazw al-fikr* or invasion of foreign ideas.

It seems to be more accurate to call the exponents of the Islamic discourses who are at the center of this book 'progressive Muslims'. The preceding chapters have shown that they represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds, objectives and expressions of religiosity, but also that they are sharing an orientation towards the future informed by critical engagement with the intellectual legacy of Islam as civilization. In terms of keeping their religion relevant for the present, this means a continuous interpretative exercise of Islam as a living tradition that can be attuned to incessantly changing circumstances.

This taxonomical conundrum also applies to the opponents of progressive Islam: aside from conservative elements within the well-established traditionalist and modernist mass organizations, the most vocal critics are found in circles of Muslim activists who, in the 1970s and 1980s, were initially referred to as Islamic fundamentalists and subsequently named Islamists. Often these glosses are considered more or less synonymous with other labels, such as Salafi and Wahhabi, and sometimes even extended to Jihadis, who propose radical—frequently violent—courses of action in fulfilling their objectives. Here again, it is important to realize that these designations are not fixed and are often applied arbitrarily. The one common denominator they share is harking back to a perceived 'Golden Age' in the Muslim past and meeting the challenges of today by recreating that historical setting. Such an attitude can be referred to as reactionary, because it offers a designation that is generic enough to accommodate a variety of subsequent courses of actions, ranging from withdrawal into personal piety, the foundation of a democratic Islamic state, the utopian desire for a restoration of the historical Caliphate, or uncompromising calls for overthrowing the existing political order.

Thus, while there are no fixed points of departure or a singular unified agenda for either the protagonists or antagonists featuring in this

book, they are united by one shared point of reference: The Islamic tradition. Working from the perspective that this history of contemporary Islamic ideas in Indonesia is part of a much wider array of intellectual discourses, the different ways in which progressive and reactionary Muslims engage Islam's civilizational legacy must therefore be considered in terms of accent rather than kind. What distinguishes progressive, conservative and reactionary Muslims from each other are the different views of what constitutes the Islamic tradition. For progressive Muslims it means an expanded and comprehensive view of Islam as a civilization along the lines of the *turathiyyun*, or heritage thinkers, encompassing not only the dominant hegemonic discourse, but also the unthought, unread and even unwritten. Conservative traditionalist Muslims have a more restricted and circumscribed understanding of Islamic tradition, consisting of Ash'ari theology, authoritative schools of law and Ghazalian Sufism; while reactionaries insist on an even narrower definition in which only the *salaf salih* ('pious ancestors') or the historical caliphate are considered worthy of emulation.

However, whether opting for a formal-structural or substantive-ideational implementation of Islam's teachings, in both instances the underlying doctrinal foundations remain grounded in the core tenet of Islam: the notion of *Tawhid*. This refers not just to an ontology of God, but must also be understood as the ultimate integrity of Islam's teachings; reflective of the human condition as consisting of personal and public aspects; the vertical-spiritual relations with the transcendent and social-horizontal dimensions of inter-human connectivities. The different interpretations given to Islam's basic tenets do not just affect individual faith, but also color Muslim engagement with concrete social and political issues. Those appreciative of religious irony would say that 'the devil is in the detail' of how such questions are worked out.

It cannot be denied that reactionary Islamists have been very successful in canvassing and mobilizing support, thanks to their superior organizational skills. In spite of this apparent disadvantage, the prospects of the progressive bloc for capacity-building may improve as younger generations begin to rely less on the leadership and intellectual guidance of a few prominent individuals. As the various chapters in this book have shown, the shadows of the late Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid still loom large over their heirs of the second and third generations. Also the influence of Dawam Rahardjo as one of the



## CONCLUSION

remaining key members of the 1970s Limited Group is still considerable, while the thought of the prematurely deceased Ahmad Wahib appears to be making a comeback. In addition the ideas of academics, such as the social historian and man of letters Kuntowijoyo and the anthropologist Moeslim Abdurrahman remain an important source of inspiration for young generations of ever better educated and increasingly numerous urban Muslims. But in contrast to the dominating influence of a few individual thinkers who determined the discourses in the final decades of the twentieth century, progressive Muslim thinking at the beginning of the new millennium is increasingly shaped by collective intellectual laboring resulting from a burgeoning Islamic academic scene, the 'blogosphere', and new phenomena such as 'crowd thinking', emerging from online social media.

As writers, educators and activists, both progressive and reactionary Muslim thinkers do not solely deal with religious questions, they also have secular vocations in dealing with Islam and politics; the place of Islamic law in contemporary Muslim societies; and finally, what this means for the country's religious plurality and the freedom of religion. There are not only differences between progressive and reactionary Muslim blocs in dealing with these intellectual responsibilities, but also among the progressive Muslims themselves. Some see this secular vocation as one of critique, thereby limiting themselves to the role of interpreter. Others take a more activist stance towards social transformation, adopting the more hands-on involvement of intellectuals as legislators.

The resulting contest for society, ideas and values revolves around three sets of themes. In the political domain, the debate focuses on statehood and the place of religion in Indonesian public life. The discussion whether Indonesia is a religious state and—if so—should remain that way, or should push ahead with secularization, is still colored by the Pancasila Doctrine, but is also given new impetus and direction by the gradually unfolding democratization process. Although a majority Muslim country, Indonesia has always avoided self-identification as an Islamic state. Still, this has not stopped what is historically one of the most important Muslim intellectual preoccupations: The development of a system of legal thinking. Also in Indonesia the interpretation and application of religious precepts has remained a recurring theme. This issue also forms the connection between the contested concepts of secularism and pluralism. While the debate on the latter concentrates on how to accommodate the country's ethno-reli-

gious diversity, the concrete issues transcend the strictly 'religious'. Thus, pluralism becomes also a touchstone for Indonesia's acceptance of and adherence to universal human rights standards regarding the freedom of thought and expression.

For progressive Muslims, freedom of thought does not just refer to the freedom of belief and conviction; it also includes an element of freethinking, that is the right to borrow widely in terms of methods, theories and their underlying philosophies. The resulting circulation of ideas and travelling of theories has not only brought innovative approaches to the study of Islam developed by Arab *turath* or heritage thinkers from the Middle East and North Africa; they often also function as a detour for reinforcing the impact of advances in the human sciences achieved by the Western academe, which Indonesia's Muslim intellectuals are increasingly exploring on their own accord. This presents another difference between progressive and reactionary Muslims. For progressive Muslims the provenance of ideas is less important than their potential for improving intellectual rigor. Whether scientific or political ideas originated in Islam or Christendom, whether acupuncture is a Chinese form of healing, or yoga an Indian way of achieving human felicity, what matters to these progressive intellectuals is that they work to the benefit of Muslims as a religious sub-category of humanity. Reactionary Muslims, by contrast, appear more apprehensive about the consequences of what they term a *ghazw al-fikr* for fear of threatening the integrity of Islamic faith. This defensiveness often blinds them to discerning accurately what progressive Muslims are arguing and trying to achieve.

The critiques of preceding generations expressed by progressive young Muslims should not merely be read as criticisms of intellectual mentors, but also as a form of self-reflection on Muslim identity. Deconstructing the intellectual legacy and wider civilizational heritage of the Muslim world by using the methodologies of Arab heritage thinkers, postmodern philosophy and postcolonial theory are not meant to undermine Islam. Initiatives such as those of the reformulation of *Aswaja* from a school of thought which merely preserves mainstream Sunni orthodoxy into a *manhaj al-fikr* or philosophical method shows that its proponents among the NU's 'New *Ulama*' and Islamic post-traditionalists want to re-energize the intellectual acumen of the Islamic tradition. In so doing they prove to be intellectual adventurers who tend to overtake their modernist counterparts in terms of progres-

## CONCLUSION

sive thinking, not shying away from using the leftist interpretations of Islam introduced by Abdurrahman Wahid and developing analyses inspired by Marxian thought. This also forms the angle from which they engage in their challenges of Islamic neo-modernism represented by the ideas of the mature Nurcholish Madjid.

Custodians of Nurcholish Madjid's intellectual legacy, such as Budhy Munwar-Rachman, have responded with their own critiques, in which they work towards synthesizing Madjid's ideas with those of his peers from the *pembaruan* years, such as Dawam Rahardjo and Djohan Effendi, and of intellectuals from comparable hybrid backgrounds with affinity to both the modernist and traditionalist strands in Indonesian Islam, such as the late Kuntowijoyo. Similarly, the Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (JIMM) uses the ideas of Muslim intellectuals with backgrounds in the social sciences, again including the economist Dawam Rahardjo and the social-economic historian Kuntowijoyo, but especially the anthropologist Moeslim Abdurrahman, to develop a 'Prophetic Social Science' capable of turning Islam into a transformative force for changing Muslim societies. In the early 2000s, this strand of progressive modernist Muslim thinking was encouraged by the Muhammadiyah's chairman, Syafii Maarif, and senior intellectuals serving on the organization's central board, such as Amin Abdullah and Munir Mulkhan. In 2005, this high-level support was cut short after conservatives took over the top echelon of the Muhammadiyah's central organization.

Such setbacks increase the edginess in tone of the debates on the three sets of concrete themes that have been identified in this book: politics, law and freedom of religion. In the immediate aftermath of regime change, discussions of Indonesia's political future and the inter-relations of Islam, statehood and democracy focussed on different models of democratic states. While some reactionary Muslim politicians and intellectuals advocated an Islamic democratic state (IDS), others continued to promote the religious democratic state (RDS) model shaped with the Pancasila Doctrine still at the back of their minds. However, there were also bold attempts by a young generation of Muslim political scientists and activists to promote an unabashedly liberal democratic state (LDS) model.

Initially, the early *Reformasi* years saw a re-run of the same political contestation that had taken place at the time of the declaration of independence in 1945. After a failed bid on the part of reactionary

Muslim politicians to bring back the Jakarta Charter and include it in the new constitution, some pragmatists shifted to the Medina Charter instead; they used the covenant between the Prophet Muhammad, the Meccan migrants and the Arab and Jewish tribes of Medina as an alternative model for Indonesia's ethnic and religious plurality. It also rekindled the debate on the place of the Pancasila Doctrine in post-Suharto Indonesia. Although it no longer functioned as the *asas tunggal* or sole foundation of the state, many Indonesians, including Muslims, considered it as compatible with the new democratization process. This in turned triggered a renewed attention to the secularization thesis, now incorporating insights gained from advances made in the thirty years of research and theorizing since its initial introduction in the 1960s. In particular, José Casanova's *Public Religion in the Modern World*, which called into question the marginalization and privatization of religion in the late modern and postmodern world, was very influential. His suggestion to speak of a differentiation between state and religion, rather than complete separation of one from the other, was considered a promising alternative in reconciling the Pancasila Doctrine with the post-Suharto democratization process. Further intellectual ammunition for the mutual existence of political and religious institutions was found in the writings of Alfred Stepan, one of the foremost scholars in the comparative study of democracies—in particular in his notion of the 'Twin Tolerations'.

The continued controversy surrounding the concept of secularism, and its persistent conflation with secularity and secularization, has a parallel in the heated exchanges over liberalism, not just between progressive and reactionary Muslims, but also among progressive Muslim themselves. While intellectuals gravitating around the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) and the Freedom Institute have no qualms about self-identifying as political liberals, others are more restrained. Concerned over the associations of the term liberal and liberalism with the neo-conservative discourse emanating from the West, and exported with renewed vigor after 9/11, Islamic post-traditionalists remain close to their key mentor Abddurahman Wahid and present liberalism as a social ethics rather than a political ideology with unwelcome associations and connotations.

These political contestations spill over into the legal domain. Having lost the battle to include the Jakarta Charter in the new Constitution, proponents of a formalization of Islamic law within Indonesia's legal

## CONCLUSION

and judicial system are using the opportunities provided by the devolution and decentralization of power from the central government to provincial and local authorities to introduce 'Regional Shari'a Orders' or *perda syariat*. At the same time, the opponents of such exclusivist Islamic claims have not only endeavoured to offset such disintegrative initiatives through the drafting of alternative legislation with nationwide validity, they have also found an alternative endogenous Islamic source for promoting universal human values: the doctrine of *maqasid al-shari'a*—the higher objectives of shari'a. This is thought of as a philosophy of law or—perhaps even more accurately—as a compass for moral conduct.

Excavating the discursive formations of these two approaches, a deconstructionist archaeology evinces that legal formalists and substantivists quarry the same intellectual deposits and that the binary opposition between the two collapses when essentialist and disintegrative readings are substituted for a more viable alternative approach that takes Islamic law as a combination of preserving the coherence and continuity of its tradition with the accommodation of diversity in religious practices and a dynamic response to changing circumstances. Against the background of the equivocal, ambivalent and sometimes outright dubious role played by the central government, an argument can be made again that the antagonism between the two camps is not so much the outcome of disagreements inherent to the source material, but rather a result of an entrenchment into their respective positions due to the precariously instable political situation that continues to mark post-Suharto Indonesia as it struggles with the transition from the early *Reformasi* era into the consolidation phase of the democratization process.

The epistemological, political and legal aspects of the contest for society, ideas and values converge in the issue of religious pluralism and its relation to freedom of thought, human rights and education. Perhaps most surprising is that the various parties in the ensuing debates all draw on the theologies of religion developed in the later part of the twentieth century and its taxonomy of exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists. Whereas the reactionary Muslims detect a degree of affinity with religious inclusivists from other religious traditions and use this to forge an ad hoc alliance to vindicate and advance their own exclusivist Islamic agendas, progressive Muslims are disputing among each other as to the desirability of full and undiluted religious plural-

ism. Meanwhile the advocates of the latter base themselves on an eclectic mix, consisting of ideas taken from theology of religions; the uncompromising intellectual honesty of the prematurely deceased Ahmad Wahib; and the unequivocal support for universal human rights standards laid down in a set of international legal documents. In another instance, a number of educationists working at the Islamic state university of Yogyakarta have chosen the development of an integrative–interconnective philosophy of education combining critical epistemological rigor with commitment to Islam’s ethical and spiritual teachings as their secular vocation.

The findings of the present study show that what is fundamentally at stake in the intellectual contestations that have been discussed is how Indonesian Muslims value state governance, civil society, and individual liberty and freedom. Whichever way they choose to go, it will be yet another instance of how religion—as a matter of people’s ultimate existential concerns—remains intricately entwined with social transformation. This in turn affects how Indonesian Muslims respond to the secularization process and accompanying calls for religious tolerance, which will ultimately determine what kind of country Indonesia will be, how the state treats its citizens and how they will behave towards each other.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. The sequence of these terms varies per source. The official text of the fatwa records ‘pluralism, liberalism and secularism’ (MUI 2011: 87), while in the secondary literature they are commonly presented as ‘secularism, liberalism and pluralism’ or ‘secularism, pluralism and liberalism’.
2. MUI 2011: 91–2. For analyses of this fatwa, cf. Gillespie (2007) and Ichwan (2013): 80–3.
3. Raillon (2011).
4. Burhani (2013a): 133–4.
5. Cf. Husaini (2009) and (2010). The sequence in which the three notions are presented is changed according to the interlocutor’s intentions.
6. Rumadi (2009): 403.
7. This led the young Indonesian scholar Ahmad Najib Burhani to apply Giorgio Agamben’s notion of *homo sacer*, or ‘bare man’, in his study of the persecution of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Indonesia (Burhani 2013c: 280, 311–29).
8. Also known as ‘Cak Nur’.
9. Abdurrahman Wahid is also known as ‘Gus Dur’.
10. Cf. Tamara (2009) and Reid (2012).
11. The ‘Cornell School’ of Indonesian historiography can be credited for highlighting this phenomenon; cf. Soekarno (1970) and Sidel (2006).
12. Assyaukanie (2009): 155.
13. Kersten (2011a): 90–6.
14. Sidel (2001): 114.
15. Sidel (2001): 111–12.
16. Interview with Anies Baswedan, Paramadina University, Jakarta, 8 October 2012.
17. Ahmad (2010): xiii, xx.
18. Meuleman (2002): 87.
19. Bose and Manjapra (2010).

20. Mandaville (2001): 83–107; Said (1984): 226–47.
21. Robbins (1993): 172.
22. Bauman (1987): 143. Cf. also my presentation ‘Free-floating gamekeepers or organic gardeners? Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia’, at the workshop on *The Public Role of Muslim Intellectuals*, St Anthony’s College, Oxford, 30 April 2012.
23. Robbins (1993): ix.
24. Ibid.: 153.
25. Ibid.: 165.
26. Ibid.: 180ff.
27. Ibid.: 194.
28. Ibid.: 195–6.
29. Abdullah (2010): 8. Also spelled *al-ghazwu al-fikry* and *ghazw al-fikri*. Cf. Baso (2006): xii; van Bruinessen (2013d): 43–70; HTI (2001). The term is also mentioned in the text of MUI fatwa 7 (MUI 2011: 93).
30. Bowen (2003): 10.
31. Ibid.: 9. Cf. also his methodological work *Religions in Practice: An Approach to the Anthropology of Religion* (Bowen 2002).
32. Bowen (2003): 10.
33. Ibid.: 19.

# 1. SECULARISM, PLURALISM AND LIBERALISM IN INDONESIAN MUSLIM CONTEXTS

1. Following a well-established Indonesian practice to accord nicknames, Abdurrahman Wahid is also known by the appellation ‘Gus Dur’.
2. The Indonesianised Sanskrit term *cendekiawan* came into fashion in the late 1960s, replacing the until then more common *intelektuil* and *intelligentsia*, which were becoming suspect due to their close association with competing political ideologies and implied betrayal of their original role (cf. Julian Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*). *Cendekiawan* was considered to be less burdened with such negative connotations (Latif 2008: 333).
3. Latif (2008): 424.
4. Ibid.: 328.
5. This ideology has continued to define the country’s political, religious and cultural landscape from the declaration of independence until the present day. As pointed out by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1908–94), Indonesia’s leading philosopher of the twentieth century, the first principle of belief in one God was intended to satisfy Muslim politicians, while stressing the territorial unity and integrity of the state catered to the nationalists. The inclusion of social justice as a further principle was intended to draw in the socialists and communists. Finally, the remaining principles of just and civilized humanitarianism and advocacy of democratization were overall rallying points to establish a sense of solidarity transcending the existing division into political camps (Alisjahbana 1966: 132–3). One aspect of postcolonial political structures in Indonesia is a mistrust



- of political Islam inherited from the colonial administration of the Dutch East Indies. This carried over into the independence struggle and the early years of the embryonic republic with a clash over the inclusion of the requirement for Muslims to adhere to Islamic law (the so-called ‘Jakarta Charter’) between the secular-minded nationalists gravitating around Sukarno and Muslim politicians united in the main Islamic Masyumi party. By all appearances it seemed during Sukarno’s Guided Democracy years (1959–65), and throughout most of the New Order Era, that the issue of Islamic statehood and the status of the Jakarta Charter had been decisively settled. However, the issue continues to flare up in one form or another. Cf. also Hadiz (2011).
6. Cf. Anwar (1995); Aqsha, van der Meij and Meuleman (1995); Hefner (1993 and 2000); Liddle (1996a and 1996b); Rahardjo (1995).
  7. They were: the late Erik Salman, Ali Mudakir, Muhammad Zaenuri, Awang Surya and Muhammad Iqbal.
  8. Anwar (1995): 25ff.
  9. Rahardjo (1995).
  10. Latif (2008): 429.
  11. Ibid.: 430.
  12. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 45–48, 61–3.
  13. Effendy (2004): 196. Golkar is an abbreviation of *Golongan Karya* or ‘Party of Functional Groups’.
  14. Raillon (1996): 179–80. On the role of the media, cf. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 257–61.
  15. These organizations included the Foundation for the Harmony of National Brotherhood (*Yayasan Kerukunan Persaudaraan Kebangsaan*, YKPK), the New Indonesian National Union (*Persatuan Nasional Indonesia Baru*, PNI Baru) and the Union of Intellectuals for the Development of Pancasila (*Persatuan Cendekiawan Pembangunan Pancasila*, PCPP) (Raillon 1996: 185).
  16. Raillon (1996): 179–81.
  17. Raillon (1997): 207.
  18. Raillon (1997): 209. PBB regards itself as the heir to the Masyumi heritage and draws its support from a more rigidly Islamist constituency than other Muslim parties.
  19. Raillon (1998): 204.
  20. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 58–9; Meuleman (2002): 86, 91.
  21. Raillon (1999): 246–7.
  22. Raillon (1999): 257. The MPR simultaneously revoked Suharto’s decree (TAP MPR Nomor 2.MPR 1978), establishing the mandatory practice of Pancasila, and passing a resolution reaffirming it as the state principles of the republic (TAP MPR RI No. 18/MPR1998), Raillon (2011): 101.
  23. Raillon (1999): 249. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 255.
  24. Raillon (2000): 202.
  25. Sidel (2006): 106ff.
  26. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 33ff.
  27. Raillon (1999): 254 and Meuleman (2002): 81–99. These attempts to manip-

- ulate radical Islamic activists were not without precedent. In the 1970s, Suharto's then security czar, General Ali Moertopo, embarked on a comparable Frankensteinian experiment with former members of Kartosuwirjo's renege *Dar al-Islam* organization (Feillard and Madinier 2011: 36–41).
28. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 261–4.
  29. Sidel (2006): 70; Raillon (2000): 210.
  30. Kadir (2000): 332–4.
  31. Raillon (2000): 209, 211.
  32. Raillon (2001): 177.
  33. Law 22 on autonomy and Law 29 on fiscal relations between the central government and the regions (Raillon 2000: 220).
  34. Raillon (2001): 155.
  35. Raillon (2001): 156. Cf. also Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 255.
  36. Raillon (2001): 157.
  37. Raillon (2001): 170.
  38. Later renamed Justice and Prosperity Party (*Partai Keadilian Sejahtera*, PKS).
  39. Raillon has drawn a historical parallel with the alliance (*dwi-tunggal*, two-in-one) between the secular nationalist President Sukarno and the leading Muslim politician Mohammad Hatta as Vice President, uniting Java and the outer islands, nationalism and Islam (Raillon 2002: 217).
  40. Raillon (2004): 218.
  41. Raillon uses characterizations like 'Sukarnomania' (Raillon 2002: 228–9) and 'defending Sukarnoist Orthodoxy' (Raillon 2004: 212).
  42. Sidel (2006): 196ff.
  43. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 255.
  44. Raillon (2003): 189.
  45. Raillon (2003): 194–8.
  46. Raillon (2004): 204.
  47. Raillon (2004): 211.
  48. Raillon (2003): 198–9.
  49. Jusuf Kalla took over as Golkar chairman from Akbar Tanjung after the 2004 elections. He was in turn succeeded by Aburizal Bakrie in 2009.
  50. Wiranto secured the Golkar nomination in 2004, but had to settle for acting as Jusuf Kalla's running mate in 2009, only to put his name forward again for the 2014 elections, on behalf of his own *Hanura* Party. The ability of Prabowo Subianto for political survival is a further illustration of the resilience of elite power. Son of the eminent economist and finance minister Sumitro Djojohadikusumo and ex-husband of Suharto's daughter Titik, this ex-special forces officer with a questionable human rights record has managed to reinvent himself as a businessman (buying the company of disgraced Suharto-crony Bob Hasan) and as a politician with enduring presidential aspirations. After failing to secure the Golkar nomination in 2004, he acted as Megawati's vice-presidential candidate in 2009 through the Greater Indonesia Movement Party (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*, Gerindra), which he had founded with Fadli Zon. In 2013, political observers were stunned when the *Partai Aceh* agreed to

form an alliance with Prabowo, in spite of his notoriety as one of the most repressive military officers involved in wiping out Acehnese separatists during the New Order years. Finally, in 2014 he secured the presidential nomination of a powerful coalition with Aburizal Bakrie as his vice-presidential candidate. Although the Gerindra–Golkar-led coalition would win the parliamentary elections, Prabowo and Bakrie narrowly lost the presidency and vice-presidency to the newcomer–veteran tandem of Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla.

51. Raillon (2004): 215.
52. Raillon (2004): 216. Cf. also Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 255.
53. For an analysis of the Democrat Party, cf. Honna (2012).
54. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 255, 270; Raillon (2005): 306.
55. Raillon (2005): 304.
56. Raillon (2005): 295.
57. Honna (2012): 478.
58. Raillon (2005): 307.
59. Raillon (2007): 244. Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 251, 270.
60. Honna (2012): 478.
61. Raillon (2005): 216.
62. Raillon (2007): 229.
63. Interview with Ahmad Suaedy (10 October 2012) and Moch Nur Ichwan (21 October 2012).
64. Raillon (2007): 232–3.
65. PPP only switched sides just before the inauguration of Joko Widodo and after its leader, former Minister of Religious Affairs Suryadharma Ali, had been replaced as party chairman by Muhammad Romahurmuziy.
66. A tentative assessment of the political situation after the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014 can be found in Lane (2014).
67. Cf. Editorial, *Jakarta Globe* (2014); Aspinall (2014).
68. Political and fiscal decentralization has also led to the emergence of new regional and local ‘dynasties’ filling the political vacuum in the absence of appointees from the metropole; cf. Buehler (2013).
69. Mietzner (2009), Platzdasch (2009), Hilmi (2010).
70. Hefner (2005b): 289; Feillard and Madinier (2011): 88–94; Heryanto and Hadiz (2006): 256; Meuleman (2002): 84.
71. Hefner (2005b): 290–1.
72. For a detailed discussion, cf. Raillon (2011).
73. Kersten (2011a): 13; Kersten (2011b): 111.
74. Cf. for example Ahmad Suaedy’s interview with Kamellia S. Soenjoto for the English-language version of *Tempo*, 14 April 2008, also published in Suaedy (2009): 177–9.
75. The significance of writing in English for reaching middle-class Muslims capable of effecting change is also corroborated by the US-based Sudanese legal scholar and human rights advocate Abdullahi Ahmad an-Na’im, whose ideas also exercise considerable influence with progressive Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia (an-Na’im 2008: x).

76. Cf. Kersten (2009).
77. In 2002, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta were given full university status and are now State Islamic Universities (*Universitas Islam Negeri*, UIN). In the remainder of the book I will refer to these institutions as IAIN when discussing the period before 2002, and UIN for issues that took place after that.
78. Anwar (1995): 156; Azra (2000); Qodir (2007): 11.
79. Latif (2008): 344–5. After Mukti Ali the post was held by a general (Alamsjah Perwiranegara), a diplomat (Munawir Sjadzali) and a naval medical officer (Tarmizi Taher).
80. The *Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia* (PMII) and *Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* (IMM) respectively, cf. Latif (2008): 356. Indicative of the HMI's political prowess was not only the intellectual influence exercised by Nurcholish Madjid, but also his successor in HMI Akbar Tanjung's ability to translate his years as a student activist into political capital and rising to the top position of the Golkar Party in 1998 (Latif 2008: 385). The career of Anas Urbaningrum (b.1969), HMI chairman during the regime change of 1998, was less felicitous. His term as chairman of SBY's PD was cut short in 2013, when he fell out with the president's family and was forced to resign over corruption charges.
81. Riyadi (2007): 91–103.
82. Kersten (2011a): 53, 63–6. For more details on this educational reform, cf. Saeed (1999).
83. Barton (2002): 102; Effendy (2003): 89–90.
84. Feener (2007a): 165.
85. Latif (2008): 331.
86. Kersten (2011a): 53–8.
87. I have expressed my reservations to the use of this term elsewhere (Kersten 2011a: 83–4, 97–101).
88. Latif (2008): 421–2.
89. For a detailed discussion, cf. Riyadi (2007): 96–8. In NU circles, the number of graduates from Middle Eastern universities still outnumbers those who have attended universities in the West. According to Rumadi this is due to the historically close ties between the NU and centers of learning in the Middle East, as well as the availability of funding opportunities through the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Rumadi 2008: 108).
90. Van Bruinessen (2009): 114–122; Feener (2007): 153; Hikam; Riyadi (2007): 42–3.
91. Latif (2008): 343.
92. The term is derived from the edited volume *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the 'Conservative Turn'* (van Bruinessen 2013a).
93. Ahmad a.o. (2010): xv.

## 2. ISLAM IN INDONESIA TODAY: DISCOURSES AND INTERLOCUTORS

1. Anwar (1995): 261–84; Ridwan (2004a). *Santri* is an indigenous term in Indonesian and designates a pious and observing Muslim. It forms part of a triptych which also includes the term *abangan* for supposedly nominal or syncretic Muslims, and *priyayi* as a reference to Javanese court culture. This taxonomy was given wide circulation by Clifford Geertz in his seminal book *the Religion of Java* (1960) and has since been used and abused in scholarship on Islam in Indonesia in general.
2. Kull (2005): 110–12; Qodir (2007): 68–80; Riyadi (2007): 82–91. The preferred spelling among Yogyakartaans for their city is still ‘Jogjakarta’, or ‘Jogja’ for short.
3. Four Sunni and one Shi’i schools of law have survived into the present age.
4. Hartono (2005).
5. Dardiry (2005); Harjanto (2003); Nurdin (2005). Cf. also <http://islamlib.com/en>.
6. Cf. Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam; A Sourcebook*; and Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism*.
7. Misrawi and Kahar (2004), Munawar-Rachman (2010). Cf. also Riyadi (2007): 165–8.
8. In 2003, Tarmizi Taher (b.1936), a former naval medical officer and Minister of Religious Affairs (1993–8) with Muhammadiyah associations, established the Centre for Moderate Muslims (CMM). Two years later Zuhairi Misrawi, who comes from an NU background, founded the Moderate Muslim Society (MMS) (Burhani 2012: 565).
9. Feener (2007): 151–81; cf also Dhakiri and Rachman (2000); Laode (2004); Misrawi (2004 and 2007); Riyadi (2005 and 2007); Rumadi (2008); Salim and Ridwan (1999); Sholeh (2004); Wahid (2005).
10. Feener (2007): 205–7; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 106–22; Latief (2005).
11. The terms *Marhaen* and *Marhaenism* originate with Sukarno, who used them to refer to the Indonesian Proletariat and the ‘ism’ as an equivalent for his own interpretation of Social Nationalism and Social Democracy.
12. Interview with Prof. Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Kota Gede, 23 October 2012; cf. also Kuntowijoyo (2010): 17. A comparable division, but using the generic designations ‘puritan’, ‘salafi’ and ‘progressive’, can be found on the *Muhammadiyah Studies* blog, maintained by Ahmad Najib Burhani (Burhani 2009).
13. A further indication of such internal division is the emergence of no less than five political parties with NU links in the post-Suharto *Reformasi* era (Kadir 2000: 320–2).
14. Cf. van Bruinessen (2013a).
15. Kull (2005): 164–78; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 65–77. The foundation’s website is at <http://paramadina.or.id/>
16. Cf. also LP3ES website at <http://www.lp3es.or.id/>
17. Assyaukanie (2009): 199–200; van Bruinessen (2013a): 44; Feener (2007):

- 173; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 132–43; Feener (2007): 173; Riyadi (2007): 67–9.
18. Feener (2007): 173–4; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 88–101; Riyadi (2007): 75–9. Cf also P3M's website, <http://www.en.p3m.or.id/>
  19. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 124–31; Riyadi (2007): 62–6, 69–72. Cf. also Lakpesdam's website: <http://www.lakpesdam.or.id/>
  20. Cf. <http://fahmina.or.id/en/>
  21. Freedom Institute: <http://www.freedom-institute.org/id/index.php>; Indonesia Institute: <http://www.theindonesianinstitute.com/>; the link to the Reform Institute appears be no longer functional; PSIK: <http://www.psik-indonesia.org/home.php?page=rubrik&id=18>
  22. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 77–88. Cf. also <http://www.icipglobal.org/>
  23. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 101–16. For Maarif Institute, cf. <http://www.maarifinstitute.org/>; for Wahid Institute: <http://wahidinstitute.org/?lang=en>
  24. Cf. <http://habibiecenter.or.id/index/en/>
  25. For a discussion of the Islamic publishing market, cf. Watson (2005b).
  26. Other titles are *Jauhar: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Kontekstual* (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta); *Hermēnea: Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta); *Khazanah: Jurnal Ilmu Agama Islam* (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung); *Journal of Indonesian Islam* (IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya).
  27. 'Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an diluncurkan lagi', *Kompas*, 28 April 2012.
  28. Going back even further in time, in his masterful political and intellectual biography of Indonesia's first prime minister, Sutan Sjahrir (1909–66), Rudolf Mrázek also situates Sjahrir as a marginal figure by choice. He suggests that this liminality on the interstices of the down-and-dirty business of daily Indonesian politics and Sjahrir's alternative focus on more detached avant garde cultural initiatives reflect the essence of this late colonial and early post-colonial progressive politician and intellectual (Mrázek 1994).
  29. Kersten (2011a): 45–88.
  30. I have explained my own reservations against the designation 'neo-modernism' elsewhere: Kersten (2011a): 95–100.
  31. Kadir (2000): 326–8.
  32. His other nickname is *Sang Kyai Pembelajar* or 'Learned Religious Teacher'.
  33. Cf. Zain and Khuluq (2009).
  34. Dhikr is Arabic for invoking the name of God, often as part of (mystical) meditation practices.
  35. For more details on Dangdut and the figure of Inul Daratista, cf. Weintraub (2010).
  36. Anwar (2013): 195–6.
  37. Kuntowijoyo (1991): 478–86; Kuntowijoyo (2001): 101–11, 357–76.
  38. Qodir (2006): 106.
  39. Qodir (2007): 62–3.
  40. For example, cf. Barton (1995b and 1997) and Burhani (2013b). This interpretation of neo-traditionalism must be distinguished from the one furnished by

- Budhy Munawar-Rachman. He uses it to refer to thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who are sceptical or even hostile to modernity, often harbouring perennial sympathies (Munawar-Rachman 2001: 441–4).
41. Said (1996): 47; and Rutherford (1990).
  42. Robbins (1993): 193.
  43. Munhanif (1990); Muzani (1990); Latif (1990); Munawar-Rachman (1990).
  44. Salim and Ridwan (1999).
  45. Quraish Shihab is Indonesia's most prominent Qur'an commentator.
  46. Kull (2005): 211. In his book on liberal Islam in Indonesia, Zuly Qodir also identifies the *Mazhab Ciputat* with liberal Islam (Qodir 2007: 69).
  47. These paragraphs are based on meetings and interviews with Azyumardi Azra (Banda Aceh, 11 January 2012; Ciputat, 9 October 2012) and Komaruddin Hidayat (Ciputat, Jakarta, 16 May 2011).
  48. From 2007 until 2009, Azra also served as deputy head of social welfare in the office of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.
  49. A Tweeter since early 2010, by autumn 2013 Komaruddin Hidayat had almost a quarter million followers.
  50. Ali-Fauzi and Bagir (1990): 26; Qodir (2007): 69–70.
  51. Ali-Fauzi and Bagir (1990): 21–2.
  52. Qodir (2007): 69.
  53. Recalling a poem from Jalaluddin Rumi in which he associates the father figure with heaven and the mother with earth, Latif detects a complementarity replicated in the association of father and heaven with Islam, and mother and earth with Indonesianness (Latif 1990: 222–3).
  54. Munhanif (1990): 64.
  55. Latif (1990): 221.
  56. Latif (1990): 231–5.
  57. Watson (2000): 221.
  58. For Nurcholish Madjid's interpretation of human viceregency cf. Kersten (2013). For transforming theology into anthropology, cf. my discussion of the ideas of Hasan Hanafi in Kersten (2011a): 133–5.
  59. Watson (2000): 219.
  60. Munawar-Rachman (1990): 244.
  61. Ibid.: 250, 256–7, also discussed in Munawar-Rachman (2001): 333–4.
  62. Munawar-Rachman (1990): 254. Italics in the original.
  63. Ibid.: 256.
  64. Ibid.: 260–5; cf. also Anwar (2005): 33–9.
  65. Qodir (2007): 76.
  66. Ibid.: 76–7.
  67. Burhani (2013a): 109.
  68. Qodir (2007): 64–5.
  69. For an assessment of Amin Abdullah and Munir Mul Khan's rise and fall in Muhammadiyah, cf. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 240–5.
  70. Although he did not go abroad to obtain advanced degrees, since then Mul Khan has held postdoctoral and visiting fellowship positions at McGill University and Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

71. Cf. Mulkhan (2005, 2007 and 2010a).
72. Also Amin Abdullah was a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University.
73. Cf. Abdullah (2000).
74. Cf. Abdullah (2010); Mahmud Arif (2008); Assegaf (2011).
75. Rahardjo (2010): 27. Cf. also Burhani (2013c): 70–8.
76. Feener (2007): 174–5; Qodir (2007): 74–5.
77. Qodir (2007): 77. Some NU followers eventually switched to the Muhammadiyah, becoming part of the bloc that is now referred to as Munu; cf. interview with Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Kota Gede, 23 October 2012.
78. Interview with Prof. Yudian Wahyudi at Pesantren NAWASEA, Yogyakarta, 8 May 2011; personal communication, 20 May 2013.
79. Ichwan and Noorhaidi have received doctorates from Dutch universities in Tilburg and Utrecht.
80. Latif (2008): 338.
81. Ibid.: 373.
82. Ibid.: 376.
83. Ibid.: 382, 284.
84. Ibid.: 377.
85. Qodir (2007): 72–6.
86. Riyadi (2007): 42–4; Rumadi (2000a): 15–18. Said Aqil Siraj also known as ‘Kiang Said’.
87. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 254–5, 262.
88. Feener (2007): 153–4.
89. Burhani (2012): 565, 568–9.
90. Feener (2007): 158–62, 167–72, 174–81.
91. Interviews with Ahmad Suaedy: Wahid Institute, Jakarta, 10 October 2012; Universitas Indonesia, Depok, 12 October 2012.
92. At one time or another, Abdurrahman Wahid, Mustofa Bisri, Ali Yafie and Masdar F. Mas’udi all served on the editorial board of *Tashwirul Afkar*.
93. Saleh (2001): 285.
94. Kersten (2011a).
95. Baso (2000). Another scholar affiliated with the NU, named Mujiburrahman, published Indonesian translations of al-Jabiri’s *Religion, State, and the Application of Islamic Law* (2001) and *Shura: Tradition, Particularity, Universality* (2003); cf. Mujiburrahman (2008): 438.
96. Riyadi (2007); Rumadi (2008).
97. Wahid (2001): 20; Riyadi (2005): 186.
98. Riyadi (2005): 185.
99. Riyadi (2005): 179–81, 185–6.
100. McCutcheon (2001). For the relevance of McCutcheon’s taxonomy to the study of Islam, cf. Kersten (2011a): 17–18, 230–2.
101. Riyadi (2005): 187.
102. Riyadi provides an exhaustive list of 27 Arab–Islamic thinkers from Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco and Syria (Riyadi 2005: 181).
103. Rumadi (2005): 4; cf. also Yoesqi (2005).



104. Rumadi (2005): 4–6.
105. Ibid.: 25–6.
106. Ibid.: 26; Riyadi (2005): 194.
107. Riyadi (2005): 184; Rumadi (2008): 133–4; Saleh (2001): 282–94. The very few non-Indonesian scholars who have paid attention to the writings of Ahmad Baso are the anthropologist Bill Watson and the historian of Islam, Michael Feener (Watson 2005: 202–8; Feener 2007: 182–221).
108. Saleh (2001): 284–94. Cf. also Baso (1999 and 2000b).
109. Saleh (2001): 284–5.
110. Baso (1999a).
111. Baso (2001): 39–42.
112. Rumadi (2008): 148. Interview with Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, Paramadina Foundation, Jakarta, 8 October 2012.
113. Baso (1999b): 25.
114. Ridwan (2002b): 21–35; Ridwan (2004): 29–47.
115. Riyadi (2005): 185.
116. Riyadi (2007): 81.
117. Riyadi (2007): 89; Burhani (2007): 565. Interviews with Zuhairi Misrawi, Pondok Indah, Jakarta, 11 May 2011 and at the Indonesian National Library, 13 October 2012.
118. Riyadi (2007): 89–90.
119. Riyadi (2007): 82–3, 86; cf. also Qodir (2007): 77. Hairus Salim is one of the editors of the *Hybrid Culture* volume.
120. Its founding members include Zuly Qodir, Happy Susanto, A. Fuad Fanani, Piet A Khaidir, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy, Pradana Boy ZTF, and Ai Fatimah Nur Fuad.
121. Ul Haq (2003 and 2004).
122. Boy ZTF (2008b).
123. Interview with Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Kota Gede, 23 October 2012. Cf. also Maarif (2009): 292–3.
124. Burhani (2013a): 113.
125. Burhani (2013a): 114.
126. Burhani (2006): 18–23; and (2013a): 116–17; Feillard and Madinier (2011): 245, 259.
127. Interviews with Ahmad Fuad Fanani and Fajar Riza ul Haq, Maarif Institute, Jakarta, 31 October 2012.
128. Cf. <http://muhammadiyahstudies.blogspot.co.uk>
129. Burhani (2012): 575.
130. Burhani (2013a): 117. In 2004, *Tabligh*, the organ of the Muhammadiyah's *dakwah* wing, carried a number of articles condemning liberalism, pluralism and inclusivism (Burhani 2013a: 139).
131. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 261; Ichwan (2013): 81–2.
132. Assyaukanie (2009): 202, 213.
133. Riyadi (2007): 87–8, 91.
134. It is disputed whether he actually graduated from LIPIA, cf. <http://arrahmah>.

- [com/read/2012/02/22/18268-know-your-enemies-siapakah-ulil-abshar-abdalla.html#](http://com/read/2012/02/22/18268-know-your-enemies-siapakah-ulil-abshar-abdalla.html#), downloaded 19 December 2012.
135. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 254, 261–2.
  136. Interview with Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, Freedom Institute, Jakarta, 11 May 2011.
  137. Interview with Luthfi Assyaukanie, Freedom Institute, Jakarta, 11 May 2011.
  138. In their study of the emergence of radicalism in Indonesia, Feillard and Madinier stress that—in contrast to the other point of origin in modern Indonesian history, Kartosuworijo’s renegade *Darul Islam* (DI)—Masyumi started out as a moderate, pro-democratic and even pro-Western political party (Feillard and Madinier 2011: 20); cf. also Effendy (2003): 33–44; Assyaukanie (2009): 72–6.
  139. Latif (2008): 350 (original emphasis).
  140. Latif (2008): 350 and 252.
  141. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 121, n. 47.
  142. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 95–6.
  143. Latif (2008): 374–5.
  144. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 118. The Al-Ghifari mosque of the Agricultural Institute in Bogor (IPB) became another important campus mosque.
  145. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 113; Latif (2008): 373.
  146. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 114.
  147. Ibid.: 169.
  148. Ibid.: 117, 175.
  149. Aside from authors with Muslim Brotherhood connections such as Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Mustafa al-Siba’i and Sa’id Hawwa, they also included al-Maududi of Pakistan’s Jamaat-e Islami and Hizbut Tahrir ideologue Abdullah Azzam. Neither these translations, released by publishing houses such as al-Kautsar, Gema Insani, Pustaka Manthiq, Hidayatullah and Wihdah Press, nor periodicals such as *Media Dakwah*, *Sabili*, *Saksi*, *Suara Hidayatullah* or *Salafy* faced any apparent censorship interference from the New Order. With the advent of the *Reformasi* period, censorship disappeared altogether so that even the most violent and rabidly anti-Jewish, Christian and other ‘enemies of Islam’ publications became freely available (Feillard and Madinier 2011: 182–4).
  150. As the cases of Ahmad Baso and Ulil Abshar-Abdalla show, not all LIPIA students end up in the reactionary Muslim camp; cf. also Feillard and Madinier (2011): 122, n. 53.
  151. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 116.
  152. An important factor in gathering this support was the success rate of DDII-affiliated training organizations such as *Nurul Fikri* and the *Lembaga Pendidikan Islam al-Hikmah* in assisting students to gain access to prestigious universities. According to informants of Feillard and Madinier, in 1997–8 one in four admittances to Jakarta’s elite Universitas Indonesia (UI) had studied at *Nurul Fikri* (Feillard and Madinier 2011: 115). Ahmad Suaedy’s decision to choose the UI campus as the base for the Abdurrahman Wahid Centre for

- Interfaith Dialogue and Peace is decidedly motivated by the desire to offer a counterweight to the Islamist influence on secular university campuses (Interview with Ahmad Suaedy, UI campus in Depok, 12 October 2012).
153. Latif (2008): 376. The phrase is borrowed from Bulliet (1994).
  154. Latif (2008): 389.
  155. Latif (2008): 358.
  156. For a detailed study of KAMMI, cf. Kraince (2003).
  157. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 49–50.
  158. He also uses social media such as Youtube and Twitter (@husainiadian), and maintains blogs at [www.adianhusaini.com](http://www.adianhusaini.com) and at [www.insists.net](http://www.insists.net), the site of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought and Civilizations.
  159. Van Bruinessen (2013b): 38–9 and (2013c): 230. Together with Hartono Ahmad Jaiz (b.1953), Husaini is responsible for the release of most publications (Personal communication from Cherry Augusta, 25 March 2013).
  160. Nef (2013): 187–92.
  161. Personal communication from Cherry Augusta, 25 March 2013.
  162. Burhani (2013a): 134.
  163. Ibid.: 125–6.
  164. Steenbrink (1996): 156.
  165. Ahmad (2010): xv.

### 3. THE WEIGHT OF THE PREDECESSORS: ADAPTATION, CRITIQUE, TRANSFORMATION

1. Bose and Manjapra (2010); Said (1984).
2. Ali and Effendy (1986): 170.
3. Ali and Effendy (1986): 178–91. For Fazlur Rahman's taxonomy, cf. Fazlur Rahman (1979 and 1982); Munawar-Rachman (2001): 436–7.
4. Ali and Effendy (1986): 174; the quote comes from Ahmad Syafii Maarif.
5. Ali and Effendy (1986): 171; Qodir (2006): 131–6; Munawar-Rachman (2001): 278.
6. Ali and Effendy (1986): 171–2.
7. Ali and Effendy (1986): 172–3. Jalaluddin Rakhmat comes from an NU family, but later also developed relations with the Muhammadiyah. He was educated at Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD) in Bandung and at Iowa State University, specializing in communication studies and psychology. Back in Indonesia, he taught at both IT and IAIN Bandung, and later also guest lectured at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies and at Paramadina University. He has played an important role in promoting the Shi'ite intellectual legacy in Indonesia, through the *Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia* (All-Indonesian Assembly of Ahlulbait Associations). Cf. <http://www.majulah-ijai.org/iografi-singkat-ustadz-jalal.html>
8. In all fairness it should be pointed out that Ali and Effendy have characterized Abdurrahman Wahid's thinking as more empirical than Nurcholish Madjid's (Ali and Effendy 1986: 171).
9. Riyadi (2007): 112.

10. According to one *hadith*, it refers to the one genuine Islamic community which will survive and enter heaven among a total of seventy-two; cf. the entry on ‘Sunna’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Brill Online, 2013, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sunna-COM\\_1123](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sunna-COM_1123), accessed 7 February 2013.
11. Sjadzili (2006): 3.
12. The three doctrinal strands are known as ‘*al-usūs al-thalātha fi i’tiqād ahl al-sunna wal-jamā’a*’ (Burhani 2012: 572–3).
13. Sjadzili (2006): 3; Burhani (2012): 573–4; Rumadi (2008): 101–2.
14. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 204.
15. Burhani (2012): 570; Rumadi (2000): 25; Sjadzili (2006): 3, 6. The head of the NU’s consultative council carries the Arabic-derived title *ra’is* ‘*am*’ or ‘general president’, while the general chairman of the executive council is called *ketua umum*.
16. Burhani (2012): 566, 570–1; Sjadzili (2006): 3, 6.
17. Burhani (2012): 571. As part this reinterpretation exercise, Masdar F. Mas’udi was commissioned with the coordination of a Forum for Book Discussion (*Forum Muahatha Kita*), but due to the opposition of conservative elements within the NU the experiment was short-lived (Abdul Mun’im DZ 2006: 19).
18. Ali and Effendy seem to imply that in taking on the classical modernists, Nurcholish Madjid was not that interested in accounting for the spiritual dimensions of Islam. It may not yet have been very obvious in the mid-1980s, but during the last twenty years of his life Nurcholish Madjid was very much concerned with this aspect of Islam (Ali and Effendy 1986: 183–5). Nurcholish Madjid’s Swedish biographer Ann Kull even characterizes him as ‘first and foremost a Sufi’ (Kull 2005: 276).
19. Ali and Effendy (1986): 187.
20. Ali and Effendy (1986): 186–1.
21. Siraj (1997).
22. Feener (2007): 156.
23. Feener (2007): 157.
24. Feener (2007): 157; Feillard and Madinier (2011): 203ff. For Sayyid Qutb’s take on *manhaj*, cf. Judy (2004); Khatab (2002).
25. ‘Menafsir Ulang Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah’, *Tashwirul Afkar: Jurnal Refleksi Pemikiran Keagamaan & Kebudayaan*, Edisi 1/May–June 1997.
26. Baso (2006): 64–92; Rumadi (2008): 47–95.
27. Rumadi (2008): 46.
28. Ibid.: 58.
29. Ibid.: 54–5.
30. Ibid.: 65. Elsewhere he notes that Abdurrahman Wahid claimed that NU culture also includes elements of Shi’ism (Rumadi 2008: 263).
31. Ibid.: 66.
32. Ibid.: 67.
33. Burhani (2013): 31–2.
34. Rumadi (2008): 72.

35. Ibid.: 91.
36. Ibid.: 92. Cf. also Arif (2008): 180–7.
37. Rumadi (2008): 82.
38. Ibid.: 45.
39. Baso (2006): 64; Rumadi (2000): 22; Rumadi (2008): 244.
40. Rumadi (2008): 245–6; cf. also Rumadi (2000): 23. In Indonesian writings *manhaj al-fikr* is also rendered as *manhajul fikr*.
41. Rumadi (2008): 250.
42. Ibid.: 251.
43. Ibid.: 268–9.
44. Ibid.: 265.
45. Baso (2006): 66. In a note he refers to Foucault's *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984* (Baso 2006: 92, n. 3).
46. Ibid.: 71.
47. Ibid.: 72.
48. Ibid.: 91.
49. Baso (2000a): x–xi.
50. Sjadzili (2006): 2.
51. Wahyudi (2002): 12.
52. Cf. Kersten (2011a): 118–42.
53. In the 'manifesto' for Islamic post-traditionalism, *Tashwirul Afkar*'s executive editor Khamami Zada points to al-Jabiri's consistent challenge of the rationalism and empiricism of Islamic modernists for its disregard of *turath* (Zada 2001a: 2).
54. Baso (1999): 40. Ahmad Riyadi is less judgemental and discusses Hanafi under his self-chosen heading 'revolutionary reading' (Riyadi 2007: 129–32).
55. In his comparative study, Burhani also draws a parallel between Fazlur Rahman's method of 'Double Movement' and al-Jabiri's 'Disjunctive and Rejunctive Readings'; cf. Burhani (2011): 10.
56. Assyaukanie (1998); Hasyim (1998).
57. Baso (2000a): xvi.
58. Baso (2000a): xix–xx. Cf. *The Thought of In Khaldun: Asabiyya and State: Aspects of Ibn Khaldun's Theory of Islamic History* (al-Jabiri 1992).
59. Baso (2000a): xxiii.
60. Rumadi (2000): 21–2.
61. Baso (2000a): xxx–xxxii.
62. *Naqd al-'Aql al-'Arabi*, consisting of *The Formation of Arab Reason (Takwin al-'Aql al-'Arabi)*, cf. al-Jabiri (1984); *The Structure of Arab Reason (Bunya al-'Aql al-'Arabi)*, cf. al-Jabiri (1986); and *Arab Political Reason (Al-'Aql al-Siyasi al-'Arabi)*, cf. al-Jabiri (1990).
63. Riyadi (2007): 132–44.
64. Baso (2000a): xxxvi–xxxviii. Cf. al-Jabiri (1986).
65. Baso (2000a): xli–xlii.
66. Ibid.: liii.

67. Ibid.: xlv–xlv.
68. Ibid.: xlix.
69. Ibid.: xxv–xxvi
70. Ibid.: li.
71. Kersten (2011a): 177.
72. Rumadi (2005): 7–8. For a detailed discussion of ‘Applied Islamology’, cf. Kersten (2011a): 193–210.
73. Rumadi (2005): 25–6. For ‘scholar–thinkers’, cf. Kersten (2011a): 222–4.
74. For conservative pressures on progressive thinking from within the NU, cf. also Misrawi (2000).
75. Rumadi (2005): 4. Cf. also Yoesqi (2005).
76. Rumadi (2005): 6–9. Arkoun calls this the ‘Official Closed Corpus’, cf. Kersten (2011a): 204.
77. Rumadi (2005): 17–18.
78. Rumadi also makes reference to al-Jabiri and Hanafi’s observations on the joint implication of traditional Islamic learning and non-Muslim Western scholarship in the process, which has resulted in a lack of critical distance and historical awareness among Muslims, as well as an inferiority complex because of the role of Orientalist scholarship in the project of Western imperialism; cf. Rumadi (2005): 19–23.
79. For Arkoun’s reliance on Castoriadis’ notion of *imaginaire*, cf. Kersten (2011a): 189.
80. Rumadi (2005): 4–5, n. 1.
81. Baso (2000a): xxix–xxx.
82. Baso (2000a): xxxiii.
83. Kersten (2011a): 215–16, 220–2.
84. Misrawi (2001): 54, 50.
85. Misrawi (2001): 61.
86. Baso (2001): 32.
87. Baso (2006): xiv. Menteng is a central district of Jakarta, where many government agencies are based and established elites have their residential areas.
88. Baso (2006): xix. In this context, cf. also *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (Ashcroft et al. 2002).
89. In *NU Studies* Baso dedicates chapters to the rewriting of *Aswaja*, political jurisprudence (*fiqh siyasah*) and the foundations of jurisprudence (*ushul fiqh*). Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, founder of the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), uses the slightly different expression *penafsiran ulang tradisi*, or ‘the reinterpretation of tradition’ (Abshar-Abdalla 2006: 150).
90. Burhani (2012): 564.
91. Baso (2006): 6.
92. Kadir (2000): 325.
93. Kadir (2000): 324, 326.
94. Baso (2006): 12.
95. The designation ‘Bandung era’ was popularized by the Egyptian economist Samir Amin and refers to the 1955 Asian–African conference held in this

- Indonesian city which led to the formation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.
96. Baso (2006): 15, 29–30.
  97. Rumadi (2001b), n.p.
  98. Rutherford (1990): 207–21.
  99. Baso (2006): 17–18, 20.
  100. Baso (2006): 22. For modernist Muslim critiques of Geertz's interpretations, cf. Burhani (2013): 17–19 and Kuntowijoyo (2001): 21–2.
  101. *Gila Gus Dur* in Indonesian. Supporters of Abdurrahman Wahid have used it as the title of a celebratory volume, cf. Suaedy and Abshar-Abdalla (2000).
  102. Baso (2006): 18, 12.
  103. Baso (2006): 21. He also notes the Indonesian translation of Linda Tuhiwai's Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* published in Yogyakarta in 1999 (ibid).
  104. Baso (2006): 6–7, 22–3.
  105. Sjadzili (2006): 2, italics in the original. In the Indonesian text the English word 'tool' is added between brackets.
  106. Van Bruinessen (2013d): 43–70.
  107. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 190, 192. Cf. Chaidar (2000); Hartono (2001).
  108. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 184–5.
  109. Abdul Mun'im DZ (2006): 19.
  110. Abdul Mun'im DZ (2006): 8–9.
  111. Baso's criticisms are not restricted to Nurcholish Madjid, but extend also to the work of other progressive-minded Muslim activists and scholars such as Dawam Rahardjo, Kuntowijoyo and Azyumardi Azra, and even NU leaders Gus Dur and younger reform-minded traditionalists such as Masdar F. Mas'udi and Jalaluddin Rakhmat (b.1949). He qualifies their work as immature, ahistorical and insufficiently rational (Baso 1999: 38–41).
  112. Baso (1999): 37–8.
  113. Saleh (2001): 287.
  114. Ibid.: 289.
  115. Ibid.: 290.
  116. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 144.
  117. Baso (2001): 26–8.
  118. Ridwan (2002b): vi–vii, xiv.
  119. Ibid.: 22–5.
  120. Ibid.: 67.
  121. Ibid.: 37–75.
  122. Ibid.: 71–2.
  123. Baso (2006): 187.
  124. Baso (2006): 190, cf. also Wahyudi (2006): 56.
  125. Baso (2006): 189.
  126. Baso (1999): 37–8.
  127. Baso (2006): 197.
  128. Ibid.: 203.
  129. Ibid.: 206–7.

130. Ibid.: 209.
131. Ibid.: 210.
132. Ibid.: 187, 213.
133. Ibid.: 217.
134. Madjid (1984): 192.
135. Baso (2006): 228.
136. Ibid.: 237.
137. Ibid.: 238.
138. Madjid (1984): ii.
139. Baso (2006): 238.
140. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 149. When discussing Nurcholish Madjid's views of the *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla quotes Madjid's as saying that they were 'basically a neutral force in terms of politics, moderation and tolerance', an interpretation that is very much the same as Ahmad Baso's own reading of *Aswaja* (Abshar-Abdalla 2006: 145).
141. Latif (2008): 384, 387.
142. Ibid.: 355.
143. Ibid.: 361.
144. Ibid.: 359.
145. Ibid.: 386.
146. Ibid.: 389.
147. Ibid.: 292–3. Adi Sasono is a grandson of Masyumi politician Mohamad Roem and a civil engineer educated at IT (Assyaukanie 2009: 103).
148. Ibid.: 363.
149. Ibid.: 385.
150. Burhani (2013): 27, 35.
151. Ibid.: 28, 40–1.
152. Ibid.: 42.
153. Ibid.: 44.
154. Burhani (2013a): 125–6; Burhani (2013): 47. Cf. also the writings by former Muhammadiyah central board member Abdul Munir Mulkhan about the Syekh Seti Jenar (Mulkhan 2001 and 2002).
155. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 265. Cf. also Rakhmat (1991).
156. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 267.
157. Effendy (2003): 86.
158. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 275–6.
159. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 277.
160. Suaedy (2009): 17, 255.
161. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 293.
162. For a more detailed discussion of this contrast between atomistic and contextualized readings in the work of Fazlur Rahman and Nurcholish Madjid, cf. Kersten (2011a): 70ff.
163. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 297.
164. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 303; Baso (1999): 37–8; Baso (2006): 210.
165. Baso (1999): 37–8. In Indonesian the title reads *Islam Kemodernan Keindonesiaan* (Madjid 1987).



166. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 295.
167. Dawam Rahardjo wrote introductions to Nurcholish Majdid's *Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan* (Rahardjo 1987) and Kuntowijoyo's *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi* (Rahardjo 2008).
168. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 303.
169. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 304; Kuntowijoyo (2001): 112–26.
170. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 309–10. For the relation between civilizational and transformative Islam, cf. also *Islam and the Transformation of Culture* (Rahardjo 2002).
171. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 310–11. Elsewhere in *Pluralist Islam*, Munawar-Rachman elaborates the solution that Transformative Islam proposes for the problem of Developmentalism (Munawar-Rachman 2001: 322–39).
172. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 313. Cf. also Sardar (2011): xivff.
173. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 321, 332.
174. Baso (2006): 238; Burhani (2013): 28
175. Qodir (2008a): 17.
176. Qodir (2006): 106.
177. Abdurrahman (2008): 195–6; Fanani (2008): 3ff.
178. Boy ZTF (2008a): 29–30.
179. Qodir (2006): 66ff, 102ff.
180. In the early 1970s, Hasan Hanafi had already advocated the transformation of theology into an anthropology, substituting theocentric thinking with a more anthropocentric alternative; cf. Kersten (2011a):132, 162–5.
181. Wahid (2007); Abdurrahman (2008a).
182. Qodir (2006): 106–7.
183. Qodir (2006): 108, 118; Ali and Effendy (1986): 187. Hasan Hanafi too had a vivid interest in Latin American Liberation Theology, translating the writings of the Colombian priest Camilla Torres into Arabic (Kersten 2011a: 162).
184. Qodir (2006): 103. Equivalent to Munawar-Rachman's 'conscienticizing research', cf. Munawar-Rachman (2001): 275, 333–4.
185. Heelas (1998): 1–18; cf. also Kersten (2011): 41–2.
186. Qodir (2006): 126; Munawar-Rachman (2001): 340–55. Cf. also Burhani (2008) and Mulkhan (2008).
187. Qodir (2006): 131; cf. also Boy ZTF (2008a).
188. Qodir (2006): 140ff.
189. Latif (2008): 388.
190. Anwar (1995): 178–82.
191. Qodir (2006): 144–5.
192. Ibid.: 155, original emphasis.
193. Ibid.: 156.
194. Ibid.: 158.
195. Ibid.: 166, original emphasis.
196. Ibid.: 195. Named after the eponymous essay (Kuntowijoyo 2001: 127–34).
197. Qodir (2006): 196–7.

198. Ibid.: 197.
199. Ibid.: 198. Cf. Hefner (2001).
200. Qodir (2006): 205. Cf. Mulkhan (1992).
201. Qodir (2006): 228–9.
202. Ibid.: 232.
203. Ibid.: 238.
204. Ibid.: 239.
205. Ibid.: 242.
206. Ibid.: 244.

#### 4. DEBATING SECULARISM: ISLAM, STATEHOOD AND DEMOCRACY

1. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 168.
2. Misrawi (2000).
3. Gillespie (2007): 222–31.
4. Cf. Robert Cribb (2002).
5. Saudi Arabia prefers the alternative spelling ‘Madinah’.
6. The Muslim intellectual preoccupation with these questions is reflected in the titles of two voluminous essay collections published in 2006 and 2008, both co-edited by the then rector of Jakarta’s State Islamic University (UIN), Komaruddin Hidayat, with contributions by other members of the Ciputat School, new *ulama* and Islamic post-traditionalists, as well as progressive Muhammadiyah intellectuals. *Becoming Indonesia* (Hidayat and Gaus AF 2006) was put together sixty years after gaining independence and looks back on thirteen (!) centuries of Islam’s existence in Indonesia, claiming that during that time it gave continuous direction to the Indonesian people’s struggle towards independence by bringing the country’s various regions together into one strong Indonesian culture. It confidently posits that Islamic identity and Indonesianness cannot be separated (Sutowo 2006: ixv). Some of that confidence seems to dissipate in *Reinventing Indonesia* (Hidayat and Widjanarko 2008) as it takes stock of ten years of *Reformasi* and looks towards a more precarious future. Although trying to give a positive projection, the collection evinces an acute awareness of the challenges still ahead, whole its subtitle, ‘Rediscovering the Future of the Nation’, betrays a sense of a setback and the need for starting over.
7. Effendy (2003): 3–8.
8. Ibid.: 66.
9. Ibid.: 72.
10. Assyaukanie (2009): 28–34.
11. Kersten (2011a): 55–9; Kersten (2013): 169–72.
12. Cf. Sura 2.30 and Sura 6.165.
13. Effendy (2003): 112.
14. Found in the Qur’an in Suras 3: 14, 110, 114 and 34:15. Kuntowijoyo has explicitly identified verse 3.110 as ‘the foundation for Prophetic Social Science’ (Kuntowijoyo 2001: 106).

15. Effendy (2003): 128.
16. For the 'objectification of Islam', cf. Kersten and Olsson (2013): 11.
17. Salvatore (1997): 32; Kuntowijoyo (2001): 307–8.
18. Effendy (2003): 208.
19. Effendy (2003): 210; Hosen (2005): 427; Ichwan (2011a): 28.
20. Effendy (2003): 217–21.
21. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 285 (original emphasis).
22. Effendy (2003): 203.
23. Effendy (2003): 203.
24. Assyaukanie (2009): 2.
25. Assyaukanie's use of the term 'utopia' is different from Masdar Hilmi's definition of utopian Islamists who reject the whole notion of democracy as alien to Islam and condemn secularism, pluralism and liberalism as 'anathema'.
26. Assyaukanie (2009): 12.
27. Assyaukanie (2009): 184.
28. Assyaukanie (2009): 185; Ichwan (2011a): 28.
29. Hosen (2005): 425–6. Reservations not only came from the parties represented in parliament; the NU Hasyim Muzadi and Muhammadiyah leader Syafii Maarif thought the struggle for introducing Islamic law unrealistic; political commentator Anies Baswedan said that 'the focus is no longer on how to bring Islam into the foundation of the State, but how to bring Islamic coloration into policies produced by the state' (Baswedan 2004: 28, quoted in Hosen 2005: 426).
30. Hosen (2005): 420 (original emphasis).
31. Hosen (2005): 428 (emphasis added).
32. Assyaukanie (2009): 194 and Ichwan (2011a): 29–32. For more details on this decision in terms of electoral strategy, cf. Platzdasch (2009): 238–40.
33. Hosen (2005): 421, 428.
34. Assyaukanie (2009): 194 (original emphasis).
35. Effendy (2003): 110–11.
36. Effendy (2003): 111.
37. Assyaukanie (2009): 195.
38. Platzdasch (2009): 235.
39. Hilmi (2010): 199.
40. Platzdasch (2009): 243.
41. Hilmi (2010): 199.
42. Hosen (2005): 422.
43. Hosen (2005): 419; Assyaukanie (2009): 189–90.
44. Hosen (2005): 429.
45. Assyaukanie (2009): 188.
46. Hosen (2005): 420 (original emphasis).
47. Assyaukanie (2009): 188–9.
48. Ibid.: 188 (original emphasis).
49. Ibid.: 18.
50. Ibid.: 17.

51. Ibid.: 103.
52. It is important to distinguish Assyaukanie's theoretical model for a Liberal Democratic State from Effendy's characterization of the political system in Indonesia during the early post-revolutionary period until the introduction of 'Guided Democracy' (1950–9) as the 'liberal democracy period' (Effendy 2003: 115).
53. Assyaukanie (2009): 19
54. Ibid.: 131.
55. Ibid.: 140.
56. Ibid.: 141. Cf. also 158–61.
57. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 178.
58. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 177, 182. In his extensively footnoted account, Munawar-Rachman also refers to the work of Talal Asad (Munawar-Rachman 2010: 178, n. 29 and 184, n. 41)
59. Kersten (2011a): 58.
60. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 208.
61. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 215.
62. Cox (1968): 15. Cf. also Effendy (2003): 73; Assyaukanie (2009): 146; Baso (2006): 275. It must be noted that, like Munawar-Rachman, Assyaukanie uses the terms secularism and secularization interchangeably throughout his book.
63. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 183.
64. Effendy (2003): 74.
65. Assyaukanie (2009): 109.
66. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 204–7.
67. Assyaukanie (2009): 109–10.
68. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 221–3.
69. Casanova (1994). It was translated into five languages, including Indonesian and Arabic. Cf. <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/jose-casanova>, accessed 29 April 2013.
70. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 224.
71. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 192; cf. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 223.
72. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 223; cf. also Cantwell Smith (1964).
73. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 225.
74. Ibid.: 226.
75. Ibid.: 215, 246–7. He refers to an-Na'im (1994), an Indonesian translation of an-Na'im's *Towards an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law* (1990).
76. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 204.
77. Assyaukanie (2009): 131.
78. Ibid.: 3.
79. Ibid.: 18.
80. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 190. Cf. also Sura 2.256.
81. The Iranian philosopher Abdolkarim Soroush has argued exactly the same point, cf. Vakili (2001): 153–5.
82. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 144.

83. Latif (2008): 388; Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 149.
84. Baso (2001): 24–8; Baso (2006): 266–7.
85. Baso (2006): 267; Assyaukanie (2009): 8.
86. Baso (2006): 268.
87. Ibid.: 269.
88. Ibid.: 300.
89. Ibid.: 272. ‘Putting overboard of traditional values’ suggest the influence of Nietzsche’s *Umwertung aller Werte* (transvaluation of all values).
90. Baso (2006): 275.
91. Baso (2006): 278–80. This final point is also noted by Mark Woodward (Woodward 2011: 23).
92. Baso (2006): 281.
93. Baso (2006): 282.
94. Cf. Arkoun (1982, 1984 and 2002). Cf. also Kersten (2011a): 211–14.
95. Baso 2006: 297.
96. Ibid.: 298.
97. Ibid.: 299.
98. Ibid.: 283. This notion will be unpacked further in the chapter on Islamic law.
99. Ibid.: 302.
100. Assyaukanie (2009): 148, 164–5.
101. Assyaukanie (2009): 149–53.
102. Cf. also Gillespie (2007): 222–6.
103. Later renamed as ‘National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief’ (*Aliansi Kebangsaan untuk Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan*, AKKBB), Raillon (2011): 109. The name of the alliance indicates that the primary concern was over the fatwa’s impact on religious pluralism. Also the text of the fatwa privileges—in a negative way—pluralism over MUI’s concerns regarding liberalism and secularism.
104. Statement on the website of the Wahid Institute, dated 29 July 2005, [http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Agenda/Email\\_page?id=252/hl=id/Sejumlah\\_Tokoh\\_Agama\\_Khawatirkan\\_Fatwa\\_MUI](http://www.wahidinstitute.org/Agenda/Email_page?id=252/hl=id/Sejumlah_Tokoh_Agama_Khawatirkan_Fatwa_MUI), accessed 29 April 2013.
105. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 187–8.
106. Ibid.: 187.
107. Ibid.: 168.
108. Assyaukanie (2005): n.p.
109. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 189.
110. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 216. Cf. an-Na’im (2008): 268; an-Na’im (2010a): 45; an-Na’im (2010b): 50. Tibi calls an-Na’im a ‘former’ liberal Muslim and reformist, deploring the latter’s alleged change of position from supporting a secular state and the process of secularization in the 1990s to his ‘illogical step’ of advocating a secular state *without* secularization in his 2008 book *Islam and the Secular State* (Tibi 2009: 96–7, 179).
111. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 188–9.
112. Ibid.: 192–6.
113. Ibid.: 223.

114. Ibid.: 203.
115. Ibid.: 191.
116. Ibid.: 198.
117. Ibid.: 287–90.
118. Assyaukanie (2009): 8; Hilmi (2010): 87, 122.
119. Wajdi (2005b); HTI (2002); Wajdi (2005a); al-Jawi (2005).
120. HTI (2001): n.p.; MUI (2011): 93.
121. Wajdi (2005a). To some extent, the discourse of their ideological adversaries is also inspired by the Western-derived division of political ideologies into left and right. Many of the progressive intellectuals discussed in this book would identify with the left. This would apply generally to those who look favorably upon Hasan Hanafi's *Islamic Left*, and more specifically to the advocates of transformative Islam. Munawar-Rachman refers to the press and other media who are supportive of manifestations of Islamic radicalism as 'rightist' (Munawar-Rachman 2010: 285, n. 229).
122. HTI (2002); Wajdi (2005b).
123. HTI (2002); al-Jawi (2005).
124. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 292.
125. HTI (2002): n.p.
126. Wajdi (2005b): n.p.
127. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 296.
128. Wajdi (2005a): n.p.
129. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 294.
130. The translation of *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa* as the 'Belief in One God' has been criticized on linguistic grounds, because the terms *Ketuhanan* and *Maha Esa* are wider and more comprehensive than 'God' and 'One' respectively. A suggested alternative translation is 'The Great Unity of the Deity'. I thank Cherry Augusta of the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS) at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) for drawing my attention to this matter.
131. Alisjahbana (1966): 132–3. One observer of politics and religion in contemporary Indonesia suggests that the five principles are most properly understood as 'a single, slightly reified, entity' (Raillon 2011: 111, n. 3).
132. Boland (1971): 101.
133. Also called *Kebatinan* and *Kejawen*.
134. Effendy (2003): 50.
135. Raillon (1999): 257. The MPR simultaneously revoked Suharto's decree (TAP MPR Nomor 2.MPR 1978), establishing the mandatory practice of Pancasila, and passing a resolution reaffirming it as the state principles of the republic (TAP MPR RI No. 18/MPR1998), Raillon (2011): 101.
136. Effendy (2003): 104.
137. Effendy (2003): 104–8.
138. Gillespie (2007): 227–8.
139. Assyaukanie (2009): 16.
140. Assyaukanie (2009): 104.

141. Rumadi (2000b): 29.
142. Assyaukanie (2009): 104–5.
143. Rumadi (2000b): 29.
144. Assyaukanie (2009): 107.
145. Assyaukanie (2009): 193.
146. Burhani (2013b): 31.
147. Burhani (2013b): 32, quoting Abdurrahman Wahid, ‘The Nahdlatul Ulama and Islam in Present Day Indonesia’ (Wahid 1986: 181).
148. *al-asl fi al-ashyā [ghayr al-’ibādah] al-ibābah illā idhā mā dalla al-dalil ’alā khilāfihi* in Arabic, Burhani (2013b): 33.
149. Burhani (2013b): 32.
150. Baso (2006): 290.
151. Ibid.: 289.
152. Ibid.: 292.
153. Ibid.: 293. Cf. also Casanova (1994): 57–8.
154. Baso (2006): 295.
155. Ibid.: 293. Cf. Casanova (1994): 63.
156. Baso (2006): 295–6. Cf. also Casanova (1994): 71 and 22 respectively.
157. Baso cites this phrase twice: Baso (2006): 290 and 296. The final direct quote is from Abdurrahman Wahid’s ‘Islamic Universalism and Cultural Cosmopolitanism’ (1994): 552.
158. Baso (2006): 289–90.
159. Ibid.: 297.
160. Ibid.: 287.
161. Ichwan (2011a): 3.
162. Ichwan (2011a): 36.
163. Stepan (2000): 48.
164. Stepan (2000): 42. Cf. also Latif (2011): 101.
165. Stepan (2000): 39–40. Cf. also Latif (2011): 101.
166. Stepan (2000): 45.
167. Ibid.: 40.
168. Ibid.: 44.
169. Ibid.: 49.
170. Ibid.: 45.
171. Ibid.: 39.
172. Baso (2006): 289. Cf. also Burhani (2013b): 33.
173. Latif (2011): 105.
174. Ibid.: 105.
175. Ibid.: 109.
176. Ibid.: 609.
177. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 206.
178. Ichwan (2011a): 33 (original emphasis). For a detailed discussion of religionization and its impact on ‘non-standard’ Islam in Indonesia since independence, cf. also Hefner (2011): 71–91.
179. Ichwan (2011a): 34. Ichwan notes that this led to an enormous expansion of

- the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which mushroomed into becoming the largest government department (Ichwan 2011a: 18). Alfred Stepan observes a parallel trend in the Turkish Republic (Stepan 2000: 52).
180. Ichwan (2011a): 36.
  181. Ichwan (2011a): 36.
  182. Raillon (2011): 97.
  183. Ibid.: 99.
  184. Ibid.: 102.
  185. For P2D, cf. <http://www.p2d.org/>
  186. Magniz-Suseno is also a Jesuit Priest and teaches at STF Driyarkara; Katoppo belongs to a Christian family of writers from Manado (North Sulawesi); Shalahuddin Wahid was General Wiranto's running mate for Golkar during the 2004 presidential elections; in 2011, Lubis (educated at Harvard and Berkeley) joined Tolleng to found the Union of Independent People Party (*Partai Serikat Rakyat Independen*, Partai SRI).
  187. Raillon (2011): 100–2.
  188. Ibid.: 100.
  189. Ibid.: 101.
  190. For a list of initial signatories, cf. *ibid.*: 112, n. 19.
  191. Ibid.: 104.
  192. Ibid.: 105.
  193. Ibid.: 105, drawing on Ma'ruf (2006). For a detailed discussion of proposed amendments to article 29, cf. Hosen (2005).
  194. Hilmi (2010): 121.
  195. Raillon (2011): 97.
  196. Raillon (2011): 106–7.
  197. Raillon (2011): 109; Interview with Syafi'i Anwar, Jakarta, 12 May 2011. For the text of Fatwa 11 against the Ahmadiyah, cf. MUI (2011): 96–100.

## 5. THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC LAW? LEGAL FORMALISTS VERSUS SUBSTANTIVISTS

1. Ichwan (2007 and 2011b). Sometimes also spelled *perda syari'ah* (Hara 2010).
2. Burhani (2013b): 32.
3. In Indonesian also spelled '*Maqashid Syari'ah*' (Wahyudi 2007).
4. Feener and Cammack (2007): 3.
5. This idea of a discursive tradition is shared by the anthropologist John Bowen; cf. his detailed study executed in Sumatra's Gayo Highlands and published as *Muslims through Discourse*.
6. Bowen 2003: 9.
7. Ibid.: 11.
8. Ibid.: 8.
9. Ibid.: 2.
10. Ibid.: 4.
11. Feener (2002): 89. Al-Irsyad is a reformist Islamic organization catering to Muslims from Hadrami (South Arabian) origins.



12. Wahyudi (2007a): 11–12.
13. Feener (2002): 93.
14. Feener (2002): 95; Wahyudi (2006): 39; Wahyudi (2007a): 77.
15. Wahyudi (2007a): 78.
16. Wahyudi (2006): 36; Wahyudi (2007a): 79.
17. Wahyudi (2007a): 78–9.
18. Wahyudi (2006): 28; Wahyudi (2007a): 17.
19. Feener (2002): 96; Wahyudi (2007a): 17, 23.
20. Feener (2002): 98 (original italics); Wahyudi (2007a): 29.
21. Feener (2002): 100.
22. Wahyudi (2006): 41.
23. Wahyudi (2007a): 43–4.
24. Feener (2002): 100; For a detailed discussion of *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*, consult the lemma in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, digital version, accessed 10 May 2013, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ahl-al-hall-wa-l-aqd-COM\\_0027?s.num=0&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=ahl+al-hall](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ahl-al-hall-wa-l-aqd-COM_0027?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=ahl+al-hall)
25. Wahyudi calls them '*hay'at al-siyasa*' and '*hay'at al-tashri'iyya*' respectively (Wahyudi 2007a: 57).
26. Wahyudi (2006): 41–2.
27. Wahyudi (2006): 39.
28. Wahyudi (2007a): 46.
29. Feener (2002): 101.
30. Wahyudi (2007a): 27.
31. Feener (2002): 103–5.
32. Feener (2002): 104; Baso (2005): 275–6.
33. Hazairin was the first and only Indonesian legal scholar during the colonial period to receive a doctorate in law with a thesis on the legal system of the Rejang people of his native Bengkulu in Sumatra; cf. Hazairin (1936).
34. Feener (2002): 107.
35. Cf. also f.n. 81 in chapter four.
36. Feener (2002): 109 (original emphasis).
37. Feener (2002): 109, n. 99. Wahyudi notes that Hazairin later acknowledged that Ash Shiddieqy's *Fikih Indonesia* was actually a more appropriate term; cf. Wahyudi (2007a): 27.
38. Feener (2002): 112, 104.
39. Wahyudi (2007a): 33.
40. Wahyudi (2007a): xxiii–xiv. Wahyudi notes that, to Hazairin's mind, this was achieved through the declaration of independence and the 1945 Constitution (Wahyudi 2006: 33).
41. Baso (2006): 257. It is probably no coincidence that for both the authorities in the Dutch East Indies and for Hazairin's postcolonial legal work, family law was of such central importance.
42. Wahid and Rumadi (2001): 12; Wahid (2010): 78.
43. Feener (2007a): 85.

44. Ibid.: 86.
45. Ibid.: 91.
46. Feener draws attention to Natsir's peculiar use of the term *hudud*, which is indeed the Arabic word for 'limits', but in jurisprudence and other political-legal discourses it is reserved for canonical corporeal punishments of particular transgressions and offenses; cf. Feener (2007a): 92.
47. Feener (2007a): 93–5.
48. The journal was edited by Syed Hussein Alatas (1928–2007), a scholar of Hadrami–Indonesian–Malay extraction, who was then pursuing a doctorate in the sociology of religion at the University of Amsterdam; cf. Alatas (1954–5).
49. Feener (2007a): 96 and Feener (2007b): 21.
50. Feener (2007a): 104 (original emphasis).
51. Ibid.: 110.
52. Ibid.: 111.
53. Ibid.: 113.
54. Wahyudi (2006): 34, 38, 42; Wahyudi (2007a): 36–8, 83–4.
55. Hosen (2004): 157–8.
56. Ichwan (2005): 47. According to Nadirsyah Hosen, Hamka's change of mind may have been due to the fact that in 1975 a member of the Muhammadiyah was Minister of Religion, as opposed to 1970, when the incumbent was from the NU (Hosen 2004: 149–50).
57. Ichwan (2005): 48; Hosen (2004): 152.
58. Ichwan (2005): 49; Hosen (2004): 153.
59. Ichwan (2005): 46.
60. Ichwan (2005): 45, 50. Ahmad Wahib, a core member of Mukti Ali's Limited Group and important inspirator of the 1970s Renewal Movement, expressed 'little confidence in those people who are called his heirs'. This criticism also extended to figures such as Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy (Johns 1987: 259).
61. Ichwan (2005): 50, 71.
62. Suaedy (2007): 39–40.
63. Interview with Ahmad Suaedy, Jakarta, 10 October 2012.
64. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 552, 559.
65. Ichwan (2005): 61–4. Moreover, 'of the twenty-two *fatwās* issued from 1975 to 1988, eleven were 'neutral', eight were supportive and three were opposed to government policies' (Ichwan 2005: 51).
66. Widiyanto (2013): 168.
67. One of the leading intellectuals among the *anak muda NU*, Marzuki Wahid proposes to use the verb 'formalize' rather than 'enforce' or 'implement', because the issue at hand is the Islamization of Indonesian society, including the state-supported introduction of Islamic symbolism, through legalisation and other means of accommodation by the state (Wahid 2010: 88, n. 10). Moch Nur Ichwan uses the neologism 'Shari'atization' to distinguish it as a particular strategy in the 'politics of re-Islamization', emphasizing that 'it is possible to stand against that Shari'atization without standing against Shari'a' (Ichwan 2011b: 184, n. 3).

68. Ichwan (2011b): 184.
69. They were united in organizations such as the Association of Dayah Ulama of Aceh (*Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh*, HUDA), Union of Daya Students (*Rabithah Thaliban Aceh*, RTA) and the Aceh Referendum Information Centre (*Sentra Informasi Referendum Aceh*, SIRA); cf. Ichwan (2011b): 189–90.
70. Ichwan (2011b): 190–1.
71. Ichwan (2011b): 195.
72. Ichwan (2007): 195.
73. Ichwan (2007): 196, 199.
74. Ichwan (2007): 193.
75. Aspinall (2009): 229; Ichwan (2007): 195, 201.
76. Ichwan (2007): 201.
77. Ichwan (2011b): 199.
78. Ichwan (2007): 198.
79. This re-transformation into Shari'a Courts took effect in March 2003 (Ichwan 2011b: 199).
80. Ichwan (2007): 204; Ichwan (2011b): 199, 201.
81. MPU and IAIN al-Raniry can be said to act as regional exponents of the *Ahl al-Ijtihad* and *Ahl al-Ikhtisas* as defined by Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy; cf. the preceding section in this chapter.
82. Ichwan (2007): 208; Ichwan (2011b): 200.
83. Ichwan (2011b): 202.
84. Ichwan (2007): 200.
85. Ichwan (2007): 193.
86. Ichwan (2007): 212–13.
87. Ichwan (2007): 203–5; Ichwan (2011b): 199.
88. Ichwan (2007): 205.
89. Ichwan (2011b): 206.
90. Ichwan (2007): 206–7, 209–10.
91. Ichwan (2007): 208; Ichwan (2011b): 210, n. 90.
92. Ichwan (2007): 205.
93. Ichwan (2011b): 204.
94. Raillon (2011): 104.
95. Hara (2010): 38.
96. Ibid.: 40.
97. Ibid.: 41.
98. Ibid.: 47.
99. Ibid.: 49–52.
100. Ibid.: 64–5.
101. Ibid.: 54–6.
102. Assyaukanie (2009): 188.
103. Hara (2010): 63.
104. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 161.
105. Feener (2007a): 167–8 (original emphasis).

106. Rumadi (2000b): 33. The name refers to the quality of paper on which they were printed. For a detailed study of this material, cf. van Bruinessen (1990, 1994, 2003).
107. Feener (2007a): 169; cf. also Salim and Amin (2003): vii–viii.
108. Mahfudh (2003): xxxiv–xxxvi, xlv–xlviii.
109. Mahfudh (2003): liii (original emphasis).
110. Feener (2007a): 171–2.
111. Feener (2007a): 156, 172–3.
112. Hosen (2004): 154–5. Siraj took a doctorate from Umm al-Qura University, and Mas‘udi attended UIN Yogyakarta and did postgraduate studies at Universitas Indonesia.
113. Mas‘udi (1985): 55–70; Rumadi (2000b): 32.
114. Feener (2007a): 175.
115. Feener (2007a): 176.
116. Sahal Mahfudh called this ‘fiqh *manhaji*’ (Mahfudh 2003: xlv–lii, original emphasis).
117. Mas‘udi (1991).
118. Feener (2007a): 178.
119. Rumadi (2000b): 35–6.
120. Feener (2007a): 180–1. One matter which Mas‘udi appears to have studiously avoided is polygamy, and it was this issue that would damage his reputation when he took a second wife in 2000, causing him to lose a lot of goodwill.
121. Mas‘udi (2010): 23.
122. Ibid.: 24.
123. Ibid.: 15.
124. Ibid.: 17.
125. Ibid.: 18.
126. As per the Qur’anic injunction found in Sura 49 (al-Hujarat): 9, Mas‘udi (2010): 22.
127. Baso (2006): 315.
128. Ibid.: 325, 329.
129. Ibid.: 317, 363.
130. Ibid.: 327.
131. Ibid.: 331–2.
132. Ibid.: 336.
133. Ibid.: 339–40.
134. Ibid.: 338.
135. Ibid.: 353–4.
136. Ibid.: 350–1, 357–8.
137. Ibid.: 360–1, 364.
138. Ibid.: 367.
139. Ibid.: 368. Baso cites from Richard Rorty’s lemma on ‘intuition’ in *the Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: ‘the absence of inference, the absence of causes, the absence of the ability to define a term, the absence of justification, the absence of symbols, or the absence of thought’ (Rorty 1967: 204–12).

140. Wahyudi (2007b): 18.
141. For a good introduction into this evolution, cf. Palmer (1969).
142. Palmer (1969): 46–65; Seeböhm (1986 and 2004).
143. As noted earlier, for his doctorate Yudian Wahyudi had made a comparative study of Hasan Hanafi, Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri and Nurcholish Madjid (Wahyudi 1993). As a spin-off from this project, he has also made Indonesian translations of selected writing by Hanafi.
144. Hanafi (1965). For a detailed discussion, cf. Kersten (2011a): 127–50.
145. Hanafi (1980); Kersten (2011a): 128.
146. Auda (2008).
147. Cf. <http://www.jasserauda.net/en/bahasa-indonesia.html>
148. Wahyudi (2006): 44–5; cf. also Wahyudi (2007b): 26.
149. Wahyudi (2007b): 9.
150. Wahyudi (2007b): 10.
151. Auda (2011); Wahyudi (2006): 45.
152. Mahfudh and Mas‘udi call them *takmiliyyat* (Mahfudh 2003: xxxv; Mas‘udi 2010: 18).
153. Wahyudi (2006): 48. One of the examples given by Wahyudi is that the imperative to preserve religion makes the execution of the acts of worship an absolute necessity, and this is facilitated by the provision of a place of worship; although the absence of a mosque does not destroy religion altogether, it makes it more difficult to sustain. On the third level of objectives, the embellishments, this means that the actual construction of mosques can be in accordance with local artistic abilities or aesthetic tastes—there is no prescription that they must be built in an Arab style.
154. Wahyudi (2007b): 20–1.
155. Ibid.: 20.
156. Ibid.: 21.
157. Ibid.: 22. This is a variant on another, more renowned, division of Muslim religiosity into three aspects: *islam*, *iman*, *ihsan*.
158. Ibid.: 22–3.
159. Ibid.: 23.
160. Wahyudi (2006): 48.
161. Wahyudi (2007b): 24–5. Usually the scale includes five levels, as *mandub* is superseded by *wajib* (obligatory).
162. Ibid.: 33.
163. Ibid.: 35–6.
164. Wahid (2010): 92.
165. Between 1999 and 2006 this has resulted in 78 local regulations in 52 regencies/cities—of the total of 450 regencies/cities in Indonesia (Wahid 2010: 90–1).
166. Wahid (2010): 78, 82.
167. Ibid.: 87–8.
168. Ibid.: 93 (original emphasis). *Eisegese* is a form of *Hineinterpretierung*, i.e. reading one’s own thoughts or ideological convictions into a text, whereas

*exegese* respects the balance between text and interpreter in terms of object–subject.

169. Wahyudi (2006): 48.

170. Wahid (2010): 94.

171. *Ibid.*: 80–1.

172. *Ibid.*: 96.

173. *Ibid.*: 98.

174. *Ibid.*: 103.

175. *Ibid.*: 104–5.

176. *Ibid.*: 107.

177. *Ibid.*: 108.

## 6. CONTENTIOUS TRIANGULATION: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

1. MUI (2011): 99 and MUI (2011): 220. Interfaith prayers are regarded as an unlawful innovation (*bid'a*) and consequently Muslim participation is forbidden (*haram*). Exceptions were made for prayers led by a Muslim, and situations where practitioners of the respective faiths pray as per their own tradition; both these practices were considered permissible (*mubah*). In regards to the Ahmadiyyah ruling, it is important to point out that—in contrast with earlier pronouncements—no distinction is made between the Qadian and Lahore branches of the Ahmadiyyah. In the past, criticisms were primarily directed against the former offshoot.
2. Assyaukanie (2009): 161.
3. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 181–3.
4. Latif (2008): 114–15.
5. Feener (2007a): 99–100; Hefner (2011): 71. For overviews and detailed studies of Christianity in Indonesia, cf. the magisterial *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008) and the Festschrift for Karel Steenbrink, entitled *On the Edge of Many Worlds* (Bakker and Aritonang 2006).
6. Hefner (2011): 72.
7. Picard (2011): 13–15.
8. Hefner (2011): 77–9.
9. For example, cf. the *Jakarta Globe* reportage, ‘Life is still tough for believers in minority faiths in Indonesia’, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/life-still-tough-for-believers-in-minority-faiths-in-indonesia/>, accessed 6 May 2013.
10. Latif (2008): 347–8.
11. Kersten (2011a): 65; Munhanif (1996): 106–8.
12. Latif (2008): 344.
13. Led by the Catholic Chinese brothers Lim Bian Kie (a.k.a. Jusuf Wanandi) and Lim Bian Khoen (Sofyan Wanandi). On the relationship between CSIS and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, cf. also Munhanif (1996): 102–3.
14. Latif (2008): 346.

15. Feillard and Madinier (2011): 73–7; van Bruinessen (2002b): 17.
16. <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/problems-will-disappear-if-ahmadiyah-disappear-says-west-java-governor/>, accessed 18 June 2013.
17. Cf. the coverage in France's *Le Point* (Douhet 2012).
18. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/05/17/renowned-priest-protests-award-sby.html>; [http://m.satuharapan.com/index.php?id=148&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=1369&cHash=985e399d57c7b18fa51c6e79925d5f9e](http://m.satuharapan.com/index.php?id=148&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=1369&cHash=985e399d57c7b18fa51c6e79925d5f9e), accessed 23 May 2013.
19. Ridwan (2002): 1–2, 7–8.
20. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 546.
21. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 526–38; Munawar-Rachman (2001): 31–54.
22. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 540.
23. Ibid.: 585.
24. Ibid.: 542–3.
25. Ibid.: 548.
26. Gillespie (2007): 222.
27. Masdar Hilmi quoted in Munawar-Rachman (2010): 568.
28. Sirry (2004) and Sirry (2006).
29. Sirry (2006): 39 (original emphases).
30. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 633. He also mentions another publication by ICIP, *Modul Islam & Multikulturalisme* (2008), written by Syafiq Hasyim, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi and Dadi Darmadi, which Adian Husaini criticized for similar reasons.
31. Sirry (2006): 39.
32. Ibid.: 11.
33. Ibid.: 9.
34. Ibid.: 13.
35. Ibid.: 17.
36. Ibid.: 19–20.
37. On Nurcholish Madjid's understanding of human viceregency, cf. Kersten (2013).
38. For 'horizontality' and 'verticality' in Nurcholish Madjid's epistemology and theology, cf. Kersten (2011a): 56–61.
39. Sirry (2006): 27.
40. Cf. also Ali-Fauzi (2005).
41. The centrality of interfaith marriage is also reflected in the publication of a research report on this topic by Indonesia's National Commission for Human Rights (Naskom HAM) in collaboration with the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP). The research was coordinated by Siti Musdah Mulia, who was also part of the CLD-KHI team, and the report was edited by the HAM commissioner responsible for research, Ahmad Baso (Nurcholish and Baso 2010).
42. Sirry (2006): 83.
43. Ibid.: 4, 86.
44. Ibid.: 81.

45. Ibid.: 82.
46. Ibid.: 87–8.
47. Ibid.: 4–5.
48. Ibid.: 2 (original emphasis).
49. Ibid.: 6.
50. Ibid.: 3.
51. Ibid.: 90 (original italics).
52. Ibid.: 89.
53. The authors use a rather liberal alternative translation, ‘five psychological aspects of *fiqh*’, for the protection of life, intellect, religion, property and lineage (ibid.: 10).
54. Ibid.: 111
55. Ibid.: 114–15. On Hanafi’s transposition and transmutation, cf. Kersten (2007) and Kersten (2011a): 130–3.
56. Sirry (2006): 92.
57. Ibid.: 27–34, 95–100; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 542.
58. Sirry (2006): 88, 111.
59. Ibid.: 98.
60. An-Na’im (2008): 131–6. Hypocrisy or *nifaq* is a charge that is on a par with apostasy; both are considered graver offences than unbelief.
61. Sirry (2006): 5.
62. For an initial analysis of this change in Qaradawi’s thinking, cf. Warren and Gilmore (2010).
63. Sirry (2006): 111.
64. Ibid.: 113. Known in Arabic as *Ihya’ Ulum al-Din* and *Fasl al-Maqal fi ma bayna al-Hikma wa al-Shari’a min al-Ittisal* respectively.
65. Ibid.: 97.
66. Ibid.: 116–17.
67. Ibid.: 116, 122.
68. Ibid.: 134.
69. Ridwan (2002b): 237, 368.
70. Ibid.: 221, 365.
71. Ibid.: 112.
72. Ibid.: 366–7.
73. Ibid.: 237, 368.
74. Ibid.: 242.
75. Ibid.: 262.
76. Ibid.: 274.
77. Ibid.: 282, 284.
78. Ibid.: 287.
79. Ibid.: 293.
80. Ibid.: 299. In this discussion, Ridwan also takes Madjid to task for his rudeness in a correspondence with Franz Magnis-Suseno.
81. Ibid.: 339ff.
82. Ibid.: 347.



83. Ibid.: 374–9.
84. The only studies in English paying attention to Ahmad Wahib's thinking in some detail are by the Australian scholars Anthony Johns (1987) and Greg Barton (1995a).
85. Ahmad a.o. (2010): xii. For the continuing appreciation for Nurcholish Madjid among the upcoming generation of Muslim intellectuals, cf. Ali-Fauzi and Armando (2008).
86. Interviews with Ihsan Ali-Fauza and Husni Mubarak, 8 October 2012.
87. Aside from a selection of award-winning essays, the volume also contains a personal note by Dawam Rahardjo and a translation into Indonesian of Anthony Johns' study of Ahmad Wahib's diary, first published in English in 1987.
88. Fatonah (2010): 77.
89. Johns (1987): 256–8, 271. Ironically, these resignations occurred during Nurcholish Madjid's tenure as chairman of the HMI.
90. *Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam* in Indonesian, cf. Effendi and Natsir (1993). It has seen many reprints since its first release.
91. Johns (1987): 261.
92. Ibid.: 264.
93. Ibid.: 268.
94. Asfinawati (2010): 9; Alexander (2010): 28.
95. Johns (1987): 260, 262.
96. Johns (1987): 274; Pahdepie (2010): 71; Fatonah (2010): 79.
97. Alexander (2010): 32.
98. Fatonah (2010): 82.
99. Fatonah (2010): 80–1.
100. Pahdepie (2010): 65.
101. Pahdepie (2010): 63–4.
102. Pahdepie (2010): 67.
103. Alexander (2010): 35–7.
104. Ahmad a.o. (2010): xix.
105. Johns (1987): 277; Rahardjo (2010): 271.
106. Rahardjo (2010): 283–4.
107. Rahman (2010): 128, cf. also Ilahi (2010).
108. Munawar-Rachman (2012): 2.
109. Anwar (2012): 199.
110. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 557–8; Assyaukanie (2009): 159.
111. Assyaukanie (2009): 165; Munawar-Rachman (2010): 647.
112. Cf. for example Syafi'i Anwar's article on this case in *Jakarta Post* (Anwar 2012).
113. Assyaukanie (2009): 165.
114. Ibid.: 131.
115. Ibid.: 140.
116. Ibid.: 162.
117. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 146.

118. Abshar-Abdalla (2006): 152. Yudian Wahyudi has criticized Ulil Abshar-Abdalla on several occasions for what he still considers a reductionist interpretation of *Ahl al-Kitab* and failure to provide an adequate definition of *maqasid al-shari'a* (Wahyudi 2006: 61–4; Wahyudi 2007b: 90–1).
119. Abshar-Abdallah (2006): 148–9, 153.
120. Assyaukanie (2009): 163.
121. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 561.
122. Anwar (2012): 200.
123. Not all MUI members agree with the interpretation of pluralism. The Muhammadiyah's Din Syamsuddin and M. Amidhan, who serves on the National Commission of Human Rights, are of the opinion that MUI should speak out against relativism, not pluralism (Widiyanto 2013: 168).
124. Anwar (2012): 202–3.
125. Anwar (2012): 203.
126. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 553.
127. Emha Ainun Nadjib (b.1953) hails from the Jombang, the NU's heartland in East Java, and has studied at the famous Pondok Modern Gontor. He has been active as a poet since the 1970s, later expanding his oeuvre with essays and novels. He is also a musician, performing with a troupe called Kiai Kanjeng. For a detailed study, cf. Daniels (2009).
128. Widiyanto (2013): 162.
129. Ibid.: 164.
130. Ibid.: 165; Howell (2013): 216–35.
131. Widiyanto (2013): 166.
132. Widiyanto (2013): 168.
133. Husaini (2010b): 22.
134. Ibid.: 23.
135. Ibid.: 4–5. He also mentions Moses Mendelsohn and Franz Rozenzweig *passim* as Jewish exponents of religious pluralism (Husaini 2010b: 3).
136. Ibid.: 6. It needs to be pointed out that, from the beginning of Nurcholish Madjid's career he has consistently argued against equating modernization with Westernization (Madjid 1987: 171–203). For more on Nurcholish Madjid's views on religious inclusivism and the role of the theology of religions in Indonesia, cf. Steenbrink (1993 and 1999).
137. Husaini (2010b): 9.
138. Zada (2001b)
139. *Jawa Pos* article of 11 January 2004, cited in Husaini (2010b): 10.
140. The Indonesian use of the word *personal* is ambiguous, as it can mean an intimate relationship between the believer and God, but also an interpretation of the transcendent as a deity in personalized form.
141. Husaini (2010b): 15. Husaini primarily draws from Lumintang's *The Challenge and Threat of the Poison of Pluralism in Present-Day Christian Theology* (2004).
142. Husaini (2010b): 19.
143. Ibid.: 20.

144. Ibid.: 21.
145. Q. 2:256 and 109:6 respectively.
146. Husaini (2010b): 25.
147. Hilmi (2010): 200.
148. Hilmi (2010): 201.
149. Husaini (2010c): 2–8.
150. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 328; Suaedy a.o. (2010): 21–2.
151. Indonesia has also ratified other international treaties on universal human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 1999, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 2005 (Suaedy a.o. 2010: 1).
152. Interviews with Rumadi (13 May 2011) and Ahmad Suaedy (10 October 2012), cf. also Suaedy a.o. (2010): 2–3 and Suaedy and Rumadi (2010).
153. Cf. ‘The Mohawk Crusade’, *Qantara* website, 11 April 2012, <http://en.qantara.de/The-Mohawk-Crusade/18831c19731i0p/index.html>, accessed 10 July 2013.
154. Suaedy and Rumadi (2007 and 2009); Rumadi a.o. (2011).
155. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 52.
156. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 58–60. Cf. also Ahmad Baso’s discussion of ‘cultural human rights’ in Baso (2006): 451–74.
157. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 61.
158. Ibid.: 65.
159. Ibid.: 69.
160. Ibid.: 71.
161. As discussed in the chapter on Islamic law, new interpretations of the concept of Natural Law by Catholic neo-Thomist philosophy did exercise considerable influence on the specialists charged with drafting the UDHR.
162. Munawar-Rachman (2010): 566.
163. Ahmad a.o. (2010): xxi.
164. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 71.
165. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 37, 39, 71–2.
166. Interviews with Rumadi and Badrus Samsul Fata, 13 May 2011. Luthfi Assyaukanie voices a similar opinion, observing that to many Indonesians the word for freedom, *kebebasan*, also has negative associations with ‘wildness’ (interview with Luthfi Assyaukanie, 11 May 2011).
167. Husaini (2010b): 27–9.
168. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 75–8.
169. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 78–9 and 87. The particular Qur’an verses invoked in this discussion include Q 2:256; Q 10:99–100; and 109:6.
170. Suaedy a.o. (2010): 84–5.
171. Ibid.: 94.
172. Ibid.: 92.
173. Ibid.: 94.

174. Ibid.: 93–4.
175. Ibid.: 96–7.
176. Ibid.: 214–15.
177. Munhanif (1996): 97, 99. Steenbrink makes a similar point in his study on the relationship between Pancasila and the Indonesian theology of religion (Steenbrink 1999: 284–5; cf. also Kersten 2011a: 63–4).
178. For a historically grounded overview of this development, cf. Arif (2008).
179. Ahmad a.o. (2010): xvi–xix.
180. Abdullah (2010): 98–9.
181. Abdullah (2010): 73.
182. Assegaf (2011): 24.
183. Abdullah (2011): 70.
184. Abdullah (2010): viii–ix.
185. A second edition appeared in 2011.
186. Abdullah (2010): 6.
187. Ibid.: 8.
188. Ibid.: ix.
189. There is a significant difference between Fazlur Rahman and Arkoun's approaches to the study of Islam. Fazlur Rahman's method of the 'double movement' remains very much part of the project of Islamic modernism to update or reconstruct Islamic learning in accordance with contemporary circumstances; while Arkoun has always rejected such associations of his critical-analytical and fundamentally deconstructionist work. He also refuses to be identified as a 'postmodern Muslim', claiming that, if anything, his discourse represents a 'meta-modern' critique. Cf. Kersten (2011a): 215.
190. Abdullah (2010): 34–7.
191. Abdullah (2010): 109–10. The quote is from *Revival and Reform in Islam; A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (2000).
192. Abdullah (2010): 46.
193. Ibid.: 30.
194. Ibid.: 30–1.
195. Ibid.: 51–2.
196. Ibid.: 49.
197. Ibid.: 59–61.
198. Ibid.: 53.
199. Ibid.: 54–5.
200. Ibid.: 65–6.
201. Ibid.: 81 (original italics).
202. Ibid.: 82–90. Amin Abdullah prefers the term 'relativity' to 'relativism'; because the former can be used as a technical-methodological term, it offers an interpretative term with practical value. Relativism as the rejection of any general standards or fundamental religious values, such as the principle of *Tauhid*, creates metaphysical problems (Munawar-Rachman 2010: 572).
203. Abdullah (2010): 92–4.
204. Abdullah (2010): 98, 101; cf. also Arif (2008): 252.

205. Abdullah (2010): 103–4.
206. Ibid.: 103.
207. Ibid.: 201 (original italics).
208. Ibid.: 191. These three epistemes can also be cross-referenced to an alternative typology developed by Abdullah's colleague at UIN Jakarta, Azyumardi Azra: substantialism (*burhani*), formalism-legalism (*bayani*) and spiritualism (*irfani*); cf. Arif (2008): 248 and Azra (1999): 9–10.
209. Cf. Abdullah (2010): 224.
210. Arif (2008): xi.
211. Assegaf (2011): 196–206.
212. Ibid.: 133–9.
213. Ibid.: 122, 141–2.
214. Ibid.: 145–7. Cf. also Abdullah's understanding of *hadara al-'ilm* as corrigible or falsifiable and thus capable of contributing to the ethics of *Tawhid* (Abdullah 2010: 65).
215. Assegaf (2011): 148–50.
216. Ibid.: 152–3.
217. Ibid.: 174.
218. Arif (2008): 255.
219. Assegaf (2011): 253–4.
220. Ibid.: 75.
221. Ibid.: 91.
222. Ibid.: 266–348. Cf. also Feillard and Madinier (2011): 240–5.
223. Husaini (2009): 74–5.
224. Ibid.: 170–174.
225. Ibid.: 186.
226. Ibid.: 190–191.
227. Ibid.: 108.
228. Ibid.: 82–84.
229. Ibid.: 12–16.
230. Husaini (2006); cf. also Husaini (2009): 17, 23.
231. Husaini (2009): 25ff.
232. Ibid.: 60.
233. Ibid.: 75.
234. Ibid.: 165.
235. Ibid.: 17.
236. Ibid.: 204–7. Specifically he mentions the new Doctorate in Comparative Religions offered by the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), a joint venture of UGM, UIN Yogyakarta and the Christian Duta Wacana University.
237. Husaini (2009): 81. Cf. Kusmana and Muslimin (2008).
238. Husaini (2009): 86.
239. Husaini (2008): 88.
240. Husaini (2009): 90–9.



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M. Amin Abdullah, Yogyakarta, 5 May 2011

Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, Jakarta, 8 October 2012

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Ahmad Gaus AF, Jakarta, 11 May 2011  
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Zuhairi Misrawi, Jakarta, 11 May 2011  
Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Kotagede, 23 October 2012  
Zuly Qodir, Yogyakarta, 8 March 2013  
Ahmad Rumadi, Jakarta, 13 May 2011  
Ahmad Suaedy, Jakarta, 10 October 2012; Depok, 12 October 2012  
Yudian Wahyudi, Yogyakarta, 8 May 2011  
C. W. Watson, Bandung, 17 October 2012

## INDEX

- Aa Gym (Abdullah Gymastiar) 29, 31, 177
- Aan, Alexander 245
- abangan* 55, 76, 142, 223–4, 295
- Abbasid Caliphate 94
- Abd al-Raziq, Ali 155
- Abduh, Muhammad 90, 184, 211, 237
- Abdullah, M. Amin 59, 61, 68, 71, 95, 128, 133–4, 150–2, 160, 264–75, 285, 297, 326
- Abdulrahim, Imaduddin 18, 75, 77, 85, 241
- Abdurrahman Wahid Centre for Interfaith Dialogue and Peace 64, 300–1
- Abdurrahman, Hafidz 79
- Abdurrahman, Moeslim 50–1, 59, 81, 85, 126, 128–30, 133, 219, 243, 283, 285
- Abou el Fadl, Khaled 107, 191, 248
- al-Abrashi, Muhammad 'Atiyah 271–2
- Abshar-Abdalla, Ulil 73, 80, 111, 117, 153, 158, 160, 162, 202–3, 218–19, 244–7, 250–1, 259, 300, 304–6, 324
- Abu Zayd, Nasr Hamid 67, 84, 95, 103–4, 106, 109, 112, 153, 157, 186, 232, 243, 248, 266, 271, 275
- Aceh 20, 24–8, 31, 91, 182, 191, 194–200, 256, 292–3, 297, 317
- Aceh Ulama Council (HUDA) 195
- adat* 181, 185–7
- Aditjondro, George 20
- Afghani, Jamal al-Din 90
- Agamben, Giorgio 289
- agnosticism 4
- Ahl al-Kitab* 228, 231, 235–6, 238–9, 252, 324
- ahl al-sunnah wa' al-jama'ah* (*Aswaja*) 63, 87–95, 98, 108–9, 157, 167, 180, 205, 207–8, 246, 262, 284, 304, 306
- Ahmadis 221, 250, 256, 259
- Ahmadiyya Movement 2, 60, 158, 178, 198, 204, 222–3, 242–5, 249, 289, 320, 321
- AKKBB (National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief) 175, 178, 222, 242, 311
- Alatas, Syed Hussein 316
- Algeria 69, 95, 100, 157, 298
- Ali-Fauzi, Ihsan 52, 54, 68, 160, 240, 264, 321
- Ali-Fauzi, Nasrullah 18
- Ali, Abdul Mukti 37–8, 53, 57–8,

# INDEX

- 60, 119, 126, 134, 224, 263,  
274–5, 294, 316
- Ali, Fachry 52–3, 85, 152
- Ali, Suryadharma 293
- aliran* (ideological bloc) 4
- aliran kepercayaan* (contemporary  
mystical beliefs) 223
- aliranisasi* (pillarization) 4, 142,  
164
- Alisjahbana, Sutan Takdir 164,  
290, 312
- Althusser, Louis 70, 97, 112, 154,  
209
- Amhar, Fahmi 79, 201
- Amin, Samir 111, 304
- amr bi al-ma'ruf wa nahyu 'an al-  
munkar* (propagate virtue and  
prevent evil) 130, 140
- anak muda* NU 43, 64–70, 71, 73,  
86, 104, 107, 316
- Anand Krishna Centre 249
- Anshari, Endang Saefudin 75, 85
- al-Anshari, Fauzan 218
- anthropocentrism 140, 149, 217,  
233–4, 237, 243, 269, 272, 307
- anthropolatry 62
- Anwar, M. Syafi'i 8, 18, 46–7, 131,  
144, 158, 160, 178, 245, 248,  
252, 323
- Appeal of Conscience Foundation  
(ACF) 225
- apostasy 42, 234, 261, 322
- Apostasy at the IAIN* 42
- Aquinas, Thomas 188–9
- Arab Spring 28
- Arabization 156, 162
- Arif, Mahmud 60, 270
- Aristotle 99, 100, 124
- Arkoun, Mohammed 67–8, 84, 86,  
95–7, 100–4, 109, 111, 112, 115,  
128, 139, 156–7, 208, 232, 243,  
264, 266, 268, 271, 275, 304,  
326
- Armstrong, Karen 273–4
- Asad, Muhammad 277
- Asad, Talal 180, 310
- asas tunggal* 131, 141, 146, 165–6,  
168, 170, 286
- al-Ash'ari 87, 93–4, 123
- Ash'arites 155
- Asia Foundation 219
- Assegaf, Abdul Rachman 60, 271–3
- Assegaf, Djafar 177
- Association of Indonesian Muslim  
Intellectuals (ICMI) 16–19, 20,  
21, 22, 40, 46, 48, 52, 75, 77,  
78, 118, 133, 138, 178, 190,  
194, 209
- Assyaukanie, Luthfi 8, 73, 96, 139,  
142–4, 146, 150, 152–5, 157–  
60, 166–7, 169–70, 188, 201–2,  
246–7, 259, 310, 325
- Aswaja (ahl al-sunnah wa' al-  
jama'ah)* 63, 87–95, 98, 108–9,  
157, 167, 180, 205, 207–8, 246,  
262, 284, 304, 306
- Atatürk, Kemal Mustafa 150, 214
- atheism 4, 153, 167, 222, 241–2,  
245, 260
- al-Attas, Seyyed Naguib 277
- Auda, Jasser 211
- Augusta, Cherry 312
- Augustine, Saint 54
- al-Azhar University, Cairo 42,  
48–9, 70, 103, 204, 211
- Aziz, Imam 70
- al-Azmeh, Aziz 96
- Azra, Azyumardi 28, 53–4, 61, 133,  
150, 176, 264, 273–4, 297, 305,  
327
- Azzam, Abdullah 300
- Ba'asyir, Abu Bakar 28
- Baderin, Mashood 258
- Bagir, Haidar 52, 61, 69
- Bakrie, Aburizal 29, 32, 33, 292,  
293
- Baldwin, James 55
- Bali bombing (2002) 28, 34

## INDEX

- Bandung 31, 55, 61, 65, 79, 118, 120, 162, 301  
 Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) 75, 78  
*Forum Ulama Umat Islam* 72–3  
 Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD) 301
- Bandung era 106, 304
- al-Banna, Hasan 300
- Barthes, Roland 70, 97, 112
- Barton, Greg 111, 128, 154, 156, 323
- Baso, Ahmad 65, 67–70, 73, 90, 92–100, 102–5, 107–17, 119–25, 128, 130, 149, 153–7, 168–70, 187, 207–9, 299, 300, 304, 305, 306, 313, 318, 321, 325
- al-Basri, Hasan 94
- Baswedan, Anies 6
- Basyaib, Hamid 176
- Batam Island 24
- Batini 155
- Bauman, Zygmunt 8, 9, 51, 86
- Bawazier, Fuad 177
- bayani* (discursive reason) 98–9, 116, 266, 270, 327
- Becoming Indonesia* (Hidayat and Gaus) 208
- Bellah, Robert 110, 147, 149
- Benda, Julian 8, 290
- Berdzikir bersama Inul* (Gus Mus) 49
- van den Berg, Lodewijk Willem Christiaan 185
- Betti, Emilio 210, 211
- Bhabha, Homi 51, 107
- bibliolatry 62
- Bin Baz, Abd al-Aziz 190
- Binder, Leonard 111
- Bishri, Tariq 111
- Bisri, Achmad Mustofa 49, 63, 73, 90, 203, 249–50, 298
- BKPMI (*Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Masjid Indonesia*) 76
- blasphemy 148, 198, 225, 260–1
- Bloom, Benjamin 272–3
- Bose, Sugata 8
- Boston University 73
- Bourdieu, Pierre 69
- Bourgeois Pluralism* (Ridwan) 69, 112, 237
- Bowen, John 11
- Boy, Pradana 71
- Brighten Institute 176
- Brahma Kumari Centre 249
- Brahmo Samaj* 254
- Brawijaya University 18
- van Bruinessen, Martin 174–5
- Buddhism 90, 227
- burhani* (demonstrative reason) 98–9, 108, 266, 270, 327
- Burhani, Ahmad Najib 63, 72, 80, 91, 96, 120–2, 167–8, 289, 295, 303
- Bush, George Walker 27, 28, 63
- Cairo 42, 48, 70, 81, 103, 204, 211, 257–8
- caliphal theology (*teologi kekhalifahan*) 56–7
- caliphate 13, 79, 94, 138, 141, 156, 163, 177, 233, 281–2
- Cammack, Mark 180
- Campus Dakwah Institutes (LDK) 77
- Casanova, José 151–2, 156, 168–73, 249, 286
- Castoriadis, Cornelius 94, 304
- Catholicism 4, 88, 169, 176, 225, 226, 227, 228, 251, 253–4, 274, 277, 320, 325
- CDHRI (Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam) 257
- cendekiawan* 39, 290
- Center for Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm) 61
- Center for Islam and State Studies (PSIK) 46, 55, 296
- Center for Moderate Muslims (CMM) 295

# INDEX

- Center for Policy and Development Studies (CPDS) 21
- Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) 312, 327
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) 224, 320
- Central Axis (*Poros Tengah*) 24, 27
- Chaidar, Al 109
- chercheur-penseur* (scholar-thinkers) 100, 103
- Chicago 38, 47, 115, 121, 155
- China 3, 23, 106, 224, 225, 269, 284
- Christianity 14, 23, 25, 30, 31, 65, 68, 149, 162, 193, 199, 223–8, 231, 237–8, 241, 250–1, 254, 269, 275–7, 300, 314, 320, 324
- Catholicism 4, 88, 169, 176, 225, 226, 227, 228, 251, 253–4, 274, 277, 320, 325
- Protestantism 4, 57, 158, 169, 172, 226, 251, 253–4
- Christianization 223
- CILE (Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics) 211
- Ciputat School 42, 52–7, 58, 61–2, 70, 75, 85, 86, 121–2, 139, 152, 159–60, 240, 264, 297, 308
- circulation of ideas 8, 84, 95, 284
- citizenship (*muwatanana*) 157, 235, 261–2
- civil Islam 5, 133
- Civil Islam* (Hefner) 5
- civil society 2, 33, 68, 105, 110, 116, 138, 145, 155–6, 158, 161, 169, 171–3, 209, 221, 236, 288
- civilizational Islam 85, 122–6
- CLD-KHI (Counter Legal Draft *Kompilasi Hukum Islam*) 216–20, 231, 321
- Clearing a New Islamic Road* 85
- Clinton, William Jefferson ‘Bill’ 25
- collective *ijtihad* 184, 190, 219
- Columbia University 50, 53
- common good (*maslaha*) 157, 181, 184, 203–4, 207, 209, 212, 234
- Common Word (*kalimatun sawa*) 230–1, 244
- communal violence 1, 3, 23, 159, 228
- communalism 230, 239
- Communication Forum of the Indonesian Mosque Youth (BKPMI) 76
- communism 23, 131, 164, 191, 239, 241, 257, 290
- Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) 239
- Confucianism 4, 158
- Connolly, William E. 249
- conscientizing research 57, 123
- conservative turn 40, 59, 72, 79, 128, 192, 194, 249, 279, 294
- Consultative Assembly of Ulama (MPU) 195, 197–9, 317
- Corbin, Henry 97
- cosmopolitan Islam 37
- cosmopolitanism 9, 52, 120, 156, 167–8
- Cosmopolitan Thought Zones* (Bose and Manjapra) 8
- Cosmopolitans and Heretics* (Kersten) 5, 47
- Covenant of Medina 13, 87, 138, 143–6, 158, 194, 201, 234–6, 255, 286
- Cox, Harvey 147–9
- Critique of Arab Reason* (al-Jabiri) 96, 98, 100, 102, 115, 232, 266
- crowd thinking 6, 283
- cultural Islam 85, 121
- cultural relativism 9, 258–9
- Dachlan, K.H.M. 275
- dakwah* 51, 74–8, 118–20, 144, 163, 189, 299, 300
- Danajaya, Utomo 56
- Dangdut* 49, 296
- dar al-harb* (abode of war) 261–2



# INDEX

- Darmadi, Dadi 321  
*Darul Arqam* 77  
*Darul Islam* 292, 300  
 DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*) 21, 22, 74–9, 120, 130–1, 138, 161, 182, 188–90, 202, 250, 275, 300  
 Declaration of Indonesianness (*Maklumat Keindonesiaan*) 1  
*Deconstruction of Tradition* (Riyadi) 65, 70  
 Democrat Party (PD) 29–30, 73, 199  
 demographics 6, 36  
 demonstrative reason (*burhani*) 98–9, 108, 266, 270, 327  
 demythologization 149  
 Dependency Theory 50, 122, 126  
 Depok 64, 176, 200  
 Derrida, Jacques 69–70, 97, 103, 107, 236  
 desacralization 116, 149, 153–4, 165, 246  
 Dewey, John 271–2  
*Dhimma* 228, 235–6, 256, 261–2  
 differentiation 130, 147–8, 151–3, 155–6, 169–70, 173, 201, 222, 246–7, 252, 269, 280, 286  
*Dinas Syariat Islam* 196  
 discourse critique 66, 95, 130, 139, 154, 232  
 discursive reason (*bayani*) 98–9, 116, 266, 270, 327  
 Djait, Hichem 96  
 Djamaluddin, Mohammad Amin 79  
*The Doctrine of Progressive Islam* 42  
 Driyarkara Advanced School for Philosophy 53, 56, 57, 65, 68, 73, 314  
 Durkheim, Émile 125, 126, 140, 150, 188  
 Duta Wacana Christian University 327  
 Dutch *see* Netherlands  
*dwifungsi* (dual function) 17  
 East Timor 24–5  
 Eck, Diana 248  
 Effendi, Djohan 55, 57, 60, 118, 122, 130, 144, 158, 160, 241, 244–5, 250, 285  
 Effendy, Bahtiar 19, 85, 89, 122, 139–42, 144, 148–9, 164–5, 170, 264, 301, 302, 310  
 Egypt 28, 38–9, 42, 48–9, 54, 67, 70, 76, 77, 81, 89, 93, 95, 96, 103, 107, 127, 129, 155, 157, 183, 190, 204, 210, 211, 234–6, 257–8, 271, 298, 304  
 Emha Ainun Nadjib 249–50, 324  
 Engineer, Ali Asghar 127, 139  
 epistemology 9, 38, 67–8, 84, 89, 95–6, 98–9, 101–9, 112–17, 121–3, 125, 127, 130, 134, 140, 153, 154, 173, 174, 202, 205, 207–10, 215, 229, 231, 233, 235, 265–6, 268–71, 287–8, 321, 327  
 Esack, Farid 92, 236, 271  
 Esposito, John 249  
 ethics 9, 14, 93, 107–8, 125, 126, 127, 133–4, 146, 152, 153–61, 167–70, 174, 180, 186, 205–7, 211, 233–4, 253, 256, 264–6, 269, 271–2, 277, 286, 288, 327  
*Etika Taubidik* 269  
 exclusivists 14, 35, 103, 114, 144, 168–9, 173, 198, 217, 220, 225–8, 232, 234–6, 239, 241, 248, 250, 252–4, 274, 277, 287  
 Fadli Zon 21, 292  
 Fahmina Institute 45  
 Fanani, Ahmad, Fuad 72, 299  
 al-Farabi 99, 155  
*fatwa* 1, 191–2, 198, 202, 204, 218, 221, 316  
*Fatwa* 3 221  
*Fatwa* 7 1, 10, 14, 31, 34, 72–3, 137–8, 151, 158–63, 166,

## INDEX

- 173, 175–6, 178, 192, 200,  
206, 221, 226, 228, 229, 248,  
250–1, 256, 262, 279, 289,  
290, 311  
*Fatwa* 11 221, 314  
Al Fawzan, Salih 190  
Fazlur Rahman 38, 47, 58–9, 85,  
96, 115–17, 121, 124, 128, 130,  
139, 155, 185–6, 211, 237, 264,  
266–8, 271, 303, 306, 326  
Feener, Michael 63, 180, 184–6,  
204–5  
Feillard, Andrée 19, 33, 74, 300  
Feith, Herbert 17  
*Fikih Indonesia* 184, 186, 216, 315  
*fiqh* 13–14, 56, 91–2, 95, 98, 167–  
8, 180–93, 202–15, 216, 219–  
20, 228–37, 242, 252, 256, 261,  
318, 322  
*fiqh sosial* 203  
fitna (chaos) 94  
*fitra* 114, 116, 208–9, 230, 272  
FKASWJ (*Forum Komunikasi Ahlus  
Sunna Wa Jamaah*) 34, 141, 191  
*For the Sake of Tolerance and  
Pluralism* (Anwar) 245  
*Forum Demokrasi* 18  
Forum for Book Discussion (*Forum  
Muahatha Kita*) 302  
*Forum Ulama Umat Islam* 72  
Foucault, Michel 69, 70, 93, 97,  
103, 107, 112, 113, 122, 207,  
303  
Foundation for the Harmony of  
National Brotherhood (YKPK)  
291  
foundationalism 267  
FPI (*Front Pembela Islam*) 1  
Frankfurt School 69, 122, 123  
Free Aceh Movement *see* GAM  
(*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*)  
Freedom Institute 45, 73, 139, 240,  
246, 286, 296  
freedom of religion 2, 46, 158–9,  
175, 220–2, 242, 244, 256–63,  
283, 285, 311  
freethinking 24, 35, 52, 57, 78, 81,  
98, 114, 242, 281, 284  
Freire, Paulo 56, 57, 123, 128, 130  
Al-Furqan Foundation 211  
*Future Religion* (Hidayat) 274  
Gadamer, Hans-Georg 210, 211,  
215  
Gadjah Mada University (UGM)  
53, 59, 60, 64, 70, 72, 176, 240,  
312, 327  
GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*)  
194, 196, 199  
Gandhi, Mohandas 254  
Gema Insani 300  
Geertz, Clifford 295  
Gellner, Ernst 62, 110  
*Gerakan Pembaruan Pemikiran  
Islam* 37, 44  
Gerindra Party 32, 292–3  
Ghannoushi, Rashid 111  
al-Ghazali 54, 60, 87, 88, 91, 92,  
93, 94, 97, 99, 123, 124, 208,  
211, 236, 237, 270, 272, 275,  
282  
Ghazali, Abdul Moqsiith 216, 248,  
252  
*ghazwul fikri* (intellectual invasion)  
11, 108, 144, 161–2, 193, 208,  
219, 250  
Gibb, Hamilton 188  
Goenawan Mohammad 28, 202  
Golkar (*Golongan Karya*) 19, 21,  
22, 24, 26–7, 29–30, 32, 55, 120,  
133, 165, 177, 200, 291, 292–3,  
294, 314  
Gramsci, Antonio 51, 122, 128,  
130, 209  
*The Great Transformation*  
(Armstrong) 273–4  
Guénon, René 274  
Guided Democracy 164, 188, 241,  
291, 310

# INDEX

- guru bangsa* (teacher of the nation) 5
- Gus Dur 48, 83, 107, 289, 290, 305; *see also* Wahid, Abdurrahman
- Gymnastiar, Abdullah (Aa Gym) 29, 31, 177
- Habermas, Jürgen 69
- Habib Rizieq (Muhammad Rizieq bin Hussein Shihab) 161
- Habibie Center 46
- Habibie, Bacharuddin Jusuf ‘B.J.’ 2, 15, 18, 22–4, 34, 46, 192, 195
- hadith* 90, 157, 183, 185, 213, 216, 219, 230, 242, 261, 270, 302
- halaqah* 76
- al-Hallaj 97
- Hanafi, Hasan 59, 67, 84, 93, 95–6, 99, 103, 104, 112, 121, 127, 128, 129, 139, 210, 234, 271, 297, 303, 304, 307, 312, 319, 322
- hanafiyyah al-samha* 230
- Hanna, Milad 236
- Hanura Party 32, 292
- Hara, Abubakar Eby 202
- Harb, Ali 70, 112, 244
- Harjono, Anwar 182, 187, 189–90
- Hartono Ahmad Jaiz 109, 301
- Harvard University 61, 73, 149, 248, 314
- Hasan, Bob 292
- Hasan, Noorhaidi 61, 298
- Hasyim, Syafiq 321
- Hatta, Mohammad 214, 275, 292
- Hawwa, Sa’id 300
- Haz, Hamzah 22, 24, 26, 29
- Hazairin 182, 185–90, 216, 315
- Hefner, Robert W. 5, 6, 19, 33, 133, 223
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 50
- Heidegger, Martin 107, 210, 211
- heresy 261
- heritage (*turath*) 40, 47, 84, 95, 97, 99, 124, 303
- heritage thinkers (*turathiyyun*) 12, 65, 68, 96, 104, 109–10, 112, 124, 162, 232, 235, 266, 282, 284
- hermeneutics 61, 71, 88–9, 95, 103, 115, 121–2, 124–5, 128, 180–1, 208, 210–11, 216, 232, 234, 236–8, 243, 263–4, 266, 268, 270
- hermetic reason (*‘irfani*) 98–9, 266, 270, 327
- Hick, John 226–7, 237, 249, 251, 253
- Hidayat, Komaruddin 53–4, 59, 61, 133, 160, 222, 228, 274
- Hidayatullah 300
- hidden knight (*ksatria piningit*) 30
- Higher School for Entrepreneurship (*Sekolah Tinggi Wiraswasta*) 56
- Hilmi, Masdar 33, 34, 145, 161, 255, 309, 321
- Hinduism 90, 224, 227, 253–4
- Hizbut Tahrir* 77
- Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) 1, 34, 79, 138, 161–3, 177, 191, 192, 195, 199, 201, 202, 233, 247, 255
- HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*) 37, 51, 54, 61, 75–9, 113, 118–20, 132, 201, 219, 240–1, 294, 323
- Hodgson, Marshall 47, 110, 139
- holism 98, 103, 108, 140, 165, 267, 205, 253, 269, 270, 273
- Hosen, Ibrahim 63, 183, 203, 204
- Hosen, Nadirsyah 145, 316
- hudud* 316
- human rights 2, 5, 12, 14, 20–2, 26, 31, 66, 69, 92, 131, 150, 152, 156, 159, 162, 171, 176, 181, 189, 197, 206, 217, 219–20, 222, 234–5, 240, 243, 251, 256–63,

## INDEX

- 272, 276, 281, 284, 287–8, 292,  
293, 321, 324, 325
- human viceregency 209, 231, 243,  
273, 321
- humanism 92, 103, 208, 236, 237,  
243, 259, 272
- Husaini, Adian 2, 78–9, 201, 229,  
241, 250–6, 260, 273–7, 301,  
321, 324
- Husayn, Taha 54
- Husserl, Edmund 210
- Huxley, Aldous 274
- Hybrid Culture* 52, 64, 68, 299
- hybridity 47–8, 51–2, 54, 60, 81
- IAIN (*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*)  
7, 37, 42, 59–60, 64–5, 75, 119,  
122, 182, 184, 186, 194, 197–  
8, 211, 215, 264–5, 273–6, 294,  
296
- Indonesia Social Equity Project  
(IISEP) 276
- al-Raniry 194, 197–8, 317
- Sunan Ampel Surabaya 60, 65,  
296
- Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung 65,  
296, 301
- Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta 37,  
42, 46, 59–60, 64, 65, 182,  
184, 264–5, 294
- Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta 37,  
42, 46, 52, 54, 57, 65, 122,  
185, 294
- ‘ibadat* 1, 183–4, 218
- Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad  
117, 242
- Ibn al-Arabi 103, 245
- Ibn Hanbal 94
- Ibn Hazm 99, 209
- Ibn Khaldun 79, 97, 237
- Ibn Rushd 65, 99, 103, 115, 123–  
4, 157, 189, 209, 234, 236, 237,  
245, 275
- Ibn Sina 99, 115, 155, 157, 266
- Ibn Taymiyya 90, 113, 115–17,  
120, 123, 124, 155, 237
- ICCPR (International Convention  
on Civil and Political Rights)  
256–7, 262–3
- Ichwan, Moch Nur 61, 168, 170,  
174, 195, 198, 298, 313–14, 316
- ICIP (International Center for Islam  
and Pluralism) 46–7, 160, 178,  
219, 228, 230, 252, 321
- ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan  
Muslim se-Indonesia*) 16–19,  
20, 21, 22, 40, 46, 48, 52, 75,  
77, 78, 118, 133, 138, 178, 190,  
194, 209
- ICRP (Indonesian Conference on  
Religion and Peace) 60, 122, 219,  
244, 321
- ideology 57, 59, 70, 92, 98, 101,  
112, 127, 132, 140, 142, 146–  
8, 154–7, 164, 168, 173–5, 186,  
188, 201, 206, 238, 248, 265,  
280, 286, 290
- Ideology and Utopia* (Mannheim) 8
- IISEP (Indonesia Social Equity  
Project) 276
- IIUM (International Islamic  
University Malaysia) 73, 78, 254
- ijma’* 94, 184, 185, 203, 242, 243
- ijtihad* 87–8, 114, 184, 186, 190,  
205, 216, 219, 231, 233, 262,  
270, 317
- Ikhlas Bloc* 43, 127
- imaginaire* 69, 94, 204
- Imarah, Muhammad 96, 111
- inclusivists 1, 14, 18, 62, 124, 134,  
143–4, 168, 173, 225–30, 233,  
235, 237–9, 244, 246–7, 249,  
250, 252–3, 255, 277, 287, 299,  
324
- India 3, 106, 127, 139, 214, 215,  
227, 254, 269, 284
- indigenization (*pribumisasi*) 7, 40,  
104, 119, 120, 153, 154, 156,  
165, 167, 168

# INDEX

- Indonesia Institute 45–6, 296
- Indonesian Conference for Religion and Peace (ICRP) 60, 122, 219, 244, 321
- Indonesian Human Rights Commission (*Komnas HAM*) 69, 260
- Indonesian Mosque Youth (BKPMI) 76
- Indonesian Mujahidin Council (see also MMI) 28, 34, 138, 141, 145, 161, 195, 201, 202, 218
- Inquisition (*mihna*) 94
- Institute for Interfaith Dialogue (Institute DIAN/Interfidei) 72
- Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences (LIPIA) 65, 68, 73, 77, 78, 300
- Institute for Pesantren and Human Resources Research (LKPSM) 45, 66
- Institute for the Research and Development of Human Resources (Lakpesdam) 45, 47, 64, 65, 66, 70, 73, 215, 219, 252, 296
- intelektual muda* NU 43
- intellectual invasion (*ghazwul fikri*) 11, 108, 144, 161–2, 193, 208, 219, 250
- intellectualism 8, 12, 19, 40, 42–52, 54, 66, 68, 74, 90, 92, 123–4, 134, 139–40, 166, 229, 247, 281
- Intellectuals* (Johnson) 275
- inter-religious dialogue 57, 60, 62, 64, 71–2, 84, 131, 162, 163, 195, 224–9, 233, 236, 245, 248, 253, 265, 270, 301
- Interfaith Fiqh/Theology* 228–37, 261
- International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) 78
- International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) 73, 78, 254
- Inul Daratista 49, 296
- Imarah, Muhammad 96, 111
- Iowa State University 301
- IPB (Institut Petanian Bogor) 78, 79, 176, 300
- Iqbal, Muhammad 50, 59, 210, 291
- Iraq 78, 252
- ‘irfani* (hermetic reason) 98–9, 266, 270, 327
- Irian Jaya 24, 28
- Islam and the Secular State* (an-Na’im) 235, 311
- Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (Assyaukanie) 142
- Islam sejati* 129
- Islam sesat* 79
- An Islamic Argument for Pluralism* (Munawar-Rachman) 226
- Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) 1, 28, 34–5, 104, 138, 141, 161, 178, 191, 192, 195, 201, 242
- Islamic Democratic State (IDS) 142, 146, 285
- Islamic law *see* shari’a
- Islam in Contention* 206
- Islamic Left 59, 312
- Islamic Liberalism* (Binder) 111
- Islamic post-traditionalism 42–3, 47, 51, 64–9, 86, 90, 95, 96, 98, 100, 103, 104–9, 111, 114, 119, 128–9, 155, 207, 280, 303
- Islamic Post-Traditionalism* (Riyadi) 65–6
- Islamic state 1, 3, 31, 120–1, 131, 133, 135, 140–1, 145–7, 150, 155, 158, 163, 166, 183, 188, 262, 281, 283, 288, 291
- Islamic Studies in Higher Education* (Abdullah) 265
- Islamic traditionalism 42, 280, 296
- Islamic University 45, Bekasi 59
- Islamism 1, 2, 4, 10, 21–2, 26, 30–1, 33–5, 42, 62, 72–8, 80, 84–5, 89, 117–18, 120, 140, 142–3, 145, 158, 161, 164, 166,

## INDEX

- 193, 217, 219, 249, 281–2, 291, 301, 309
- Islamization 39–40, 74, 77, 145, 147, 153–6, 174, 175, 180, 195, 201, 270, 316
- Isma'ilis 155
- Israel 26, 191
- ISTAC (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization) 78
- ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology) 75, 78
- al-Jabiri, Muhammad 'Abid 65, 67–9, 84, 95–104, 106, 108–9, 111–12, 115, 121, 139, 157, 209, 232, 236, 266, 270, 298, 303, 304, 319
- Jakarta 6, 29, 32, 45, 51, 58, 59, 62, 66, 70, 113, 118–19, 138, 194–7, 198, 199, 251
- Ciputat School 42, 52–7, 58, 61–2, 70, 75, 85, 86, 121–2, 139, 152, 159–60, 240, 264, 297, 308
- Freedom Institute 45, 73, 139, 240, 246, 286, 296
- IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah 37, 42, 46, 52, 54, 57, 65, 122, 185, 294
- ICIP (International Center for Islam and Pluralism) 46–7, 160, 178, 219, 228, 230, 252, 321
- Jayabaya University 78
- Lakpesdam (Institute for the Research and Development of Human Resources) 45, 47, 64, 65, 66, 70, 73, 215, 219, 252, 296
- LIPIA (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*) 65, 68, 73, 77, 78, 300
- LSAF (*Lembaga Studi Agama dan Falsafat*) 45–7, 56
- Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity 46, 51, 72, 129, 296
- Marriott Hotel bombing (2003) 28
- National Monument 178, 222
- Paramadina University 6, 44, 54, 55, 56, 73, 79, 118–19, 139, 168, 216, 240, 301
- STF Driyarkara (*Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara*) 53, 56, 57, 65, 68, 73, 314
- UIN Syarif Hidayatullah 53, 72, 95, 133, 139, 150, 222, 274, 276, 308, 327
- Universitas Indonesia 51, 53, 64, 78, 176, 185, 300, 318
- Wahid Institute 46, 64, 191, 206, 215, 219, 248, 256–9, 261–2, 296, 298, 311
- Jakarta Charter 2–3, 13, 26, 138, 141, 143–6, 147, 164, 166, 178, 179, 193–4, 200, 201, 215, 233, 247, 286, 291
- Jakarta Globe* 320
- Jama'ah Tabligh 77, 249
- Jamaat-e Islami 132, 300
- James, William 188, 271
- Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 46
- Jamilah, Maryam 55
- Java 18, 25, 32, 48–50, 55, 59, 62, 64, 68, 73, 105, 112, 191, 223–4, 240, 292, 295, 324
- Javanese mysticism (Javanism) 4, 30, 158, 165, 223, 224
- Jayabaya University 78
- Jenar, Syekh Seti 306
- Ji (*Jemaah Islamiyah*) 28, 31, 35
- JIL (*Jaringan Islam Liberal*) 42, 72–3, 104, 147, 152, 153, 176, 216, 219, 246, 250, 286, 304
- JIMM (*Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah*) 43, 71–3, 80, 128, 129–30, 133, 138, 222, 252, 285

# INDEX

- Jogja School 42, 58–62, 75  
 Johns, Anthony 241, 243–4, 323  
 Johnson, Paul 275  
 Jokowi (Joko Widodo) 32–3, 54, 293  
 Jombang 48, 240, 324  
 Jordan 39, 73, 77  
 al-Jubrin, Abdallah 190  
 al-Junayd, 87, 91, 93
- Kahar, Novriantoni 42, 73  
 Kalimantan 20, 24, 25, 60, 61  
 kalimatun sawa (common word) 230–1, 244  
 Kalla, Jusuf 29–30, 32–3, 177, 292, 293  
 Kallen, Horace 255  
 KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia) 78, 199  
 Kant, Immanuel 60, 103, 208, 253, 266  
 Kartosuwirjo 292, 300  
 Katoppo, Aristides 176, 314  
*kaum muda* NU see *anak muda* NU  
 al-Kautsar 300  
*kebatinan* see Javanese mysticism  
*kebebasan* 325  
*kejawen* see Javanese mysticism  
*Kembali ke Khittah* 1926 39, 48, 63, 88, 105, 110, 167–8, 180, 205  
*kepercayaan* see Javanese mysticism  
*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* 164, 312  
 Khan, Muqtedar 139  
 Kharijites 94  
 KHI-Inpres (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*) 187, 193, 216–20, 231, 321  
*khilafa* Allah *fi'l-ard* (God's Viceregent on Earth) 231  
*Khittah* 1926 see *Kembali ke Khittah* 1926  
 Kiemas, Taufiq 177
- Kingston, Maxine Hong 55  
 KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam*) 21, 78, 109, 141, 161  
*Kitab Kuning* (Yellow Books) 203, 204–5, 216  
 KMP (*Koalisi Merah-Putih*) 32  
 Knitter, Paul 226–7, 237, 251, 253, 277  
 Komnas HAM (Indonesian Human Rights Commission) 69, 260  
*Kompas* (periodical) 106, 162, 296  
*Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (KHI) 187, 193, 216–20, 231, 321  
 Krishna, Anand 158, 249  
 Krishnamurti 56  
*ksatria piningit* (hidden knight) 30  
 Kuhn, Thomas 125, 267  
 Kull, Ann 52, 302  
*al-kulliyat al-khamsa*, 157, 234  
 Kuntowijoyo 50–1, 59, 81, 85, 122, 125–6, 128–30, 132, 134, 140–2, 146, 167, 170, 243, 269, 283, 285, 305, 308  
 Kurzman, Charles 111, 154  
*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* 164, 312
- Labib, Rokhmat S. 79  
 Lacan, Jacques 97, 195  
 Ladrière, Jean 154  
 Lakatos, Imre 267–8, 270  
 Lakpesdam (Institute for the Research and Development of Human Resources) 45, 47, 64, 65, 66, 70, 73, 215, 219, 252, 296  
 Lamardi, Yan Husein 158  
 Laroui, Abdallah 96, 111  
 Laskar Jihad 28, 34–5, 145, 195, 202, 281  
 Latif, Yudi 8, 17, 19, 38, 52, 55–7, 61–2, 73–5, 77–8, 117–20, 130, 132, 145, 168, 171, 173–4, 176, 224, 297

## INDEX

- LDK (*Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*) 77
- Legislators and Interpreters* (Bauman) 8
- lepas-landas* (taking-off) 17
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 9, 97, 103
- Liberal Democratic State (LDS) 142, 146–7, 246, 285
- Liberal Islam 42, 53, 72–3, 78–9, 106, 109, 111, 137, 147, 153–63, 218–19, 250, 273–7, 286, 297, 304
- Liberal Islam* (Kurzman) 111
- Liberal Islam Network (JIL) 42, 72–3, 104, 147, 152, 153, 176, 216, 219, 246, 250, 286, 304
- liberalism 1, 2, 5, 10, 14, 20, 31, 34, 35, 42, 57, 72, 88, 105, 106, 111, 137–8, 147, 153, 154, 159, 161–3, 167, 204, 219, 221, 223, 247, 256, 263, 271, 273, 279–81, 286, 289
- Liberal Islamic School 133
- Liberation Theology 57, 88, 92, 129–30
- liberty 10, 14, 126, 200, 288
- Liddle, William 19
- Lim Bian Kie and Khoen 320
- liminality 47, 49, 52, 66, 69, 107, 296
- Limited Group 58, 60, 122, 244, 250, 283, 316
- LIPIA (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab*) 65, 68, 73, 77, 78, 300
- LKiS (*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial*) 45, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 119, 215, 219
- LKPSM (*Lembaga Kajian Pesantren dan Sumber Daya Manusia*) 45, 66
- LMD (*Latihan Mujahid Dakwah*) 75
- LP3ES (*Lembaga Penelitian, Pendi-*  
*dikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi*  
*dan Sosial*) 45–6, 119
- LSAF (*Lembaga Studi Agama dan Falsafat*) 45–7, 56
- LSIP (*Lembaga Studi Islam Progresif*) 70
- Lubis, Todung Mulya 176, 314
- Luftmensch* 9, 48
- Lyotard, Jean-François 113
- al-Ma‘arri 103
- al-Ma‘mun 208
- Ma‘ruf Amin 31, 137, 176–7, 192, 201
- Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity 46, 51, 72, 129, 296
- Maarif, Ahmad Syafii 28, 29, 38, 46, 51, 53, 58–9, 71, 72, 115, 129–33, 146, 149–50, 152, 167, 202, 225, 245, 285, 301, 309
- MacIntyre, Alisdair 180
- Madhhab Nasional* 190, 216
- Madinier, Rémy 19, 74, 300
- Madjid, Nurcholish 3, 5, 22, 29, 37, 38, 44, 46, 47–8, 50, 52–7, 58, 70, 73, 75–6, 81, 85–8, 90, 95, 110–28, 130–1, 134, 139–41, 143–4, 147–50, 153–7, 174, 202, 218, 226–31, 236–40, 243–7, 249, 251, 255, 259, 264, 277, 282, 285, 294, 297, 301, 302, 305, 306, 319, 321, 322, 323, 324
- madrasahs* 7
- Madrasuta, Made 254
- Madura 20, 70, 240
- Magnis-Suseno, Franz 176, 225, 228, 245, 253, 277, 322
- Mahfudh, Sahal 63–4, 73, 90, 137, 146, 192, 203–4, 210, 254, 318, 319
- Maklumat Keindonesiaan* (Declaration of Indonesianness) 1, 34–5, 176, 178, 202
- Malang 18, 59, 78



## INDEX

- Malaysia 73, 76, 77, 78, 254, 277
- de Man, Paul 107
- Mandaville, Peter 8
- manhaj* (method) 89–90, 92, 95, 203, 207, 262
- manhaj Ahlu al-Hadits/Salafi* 90
- manhaj fikr* 92, 104, 108–9, 167, 284, 303, 318
- manhaj sanasini* (of all directions) 75
- taqlid manhaj* (methodological imitation) 89
- Manjapra, Kris 8
- Mannheim, Karl 8, 123, 142, 154, 161, 268, 302
- maqasid al-shari'a* (objectives of shari'a) 14, 157, 180, 202, 204, 209, 210–18, 220, 232–4, 244, 261, 269, 287, 324
- Al-Maqasid Centre for Research in the Philosophy of Law 211
- al-Maqrizi 110
- Marcoes-Natsir, Lies 206
- marginality 47, 51, 54, 66, 106, 107
- marhaen* 43, 59, 295
- Marriott Hotel bombing (2003) 28
- Maritain, Jacques 189
- Marx, Karl 50, 57, 97, 125
- Marxism 50, 66, 111, 112, 119, 125, 126, 130, 161–2, 235, 260, 275, 285
- Mas'udi, Masdar F. 60, 63, 68, 80, 158, 187, 203, 204–9, 210, 218–19, 228, 247, 302, 305, 318, 319
- Massignon, Louis 97
- maslaha* (common good) 157, 181, 184, 203–4, 207, 209, 212, 234
- masyarakat adil* (just society) 155
- masyarakat madani* (civil society) 110, 155
- masyarakat sipil* (civil society) 110
- Masyumi Party 3, 37, 74, 79, 112, 120, 131, 140, 143, 146, 155, 164, 182, 187, 189, 291, 300, 306
- al-Maturidi 87, 93
- al-Maududi 59, 132, 300
- Mazhab Ciputat* 42, 52–7, 58, 61–2, 70, 75, 85, 86, 121–2, 139, 152, 159–60, 240, 264, 297, 308
- mazhad Islam Liberal* 133
- mazhab manhaji* (methodological school) 207
- Mazhab Jakarta* 70, 73
- Mazhab Jogja* 42, 58–62, 75
- mazhab kritis* 67, 101
- Mazhab Sapen* 42
- Mazrui, Ali 139
- McCarthy, Mary 55
- McCutcheon, Russell 66, 298
- McGill University 38, 61, 95, 263, 274, 276, 297
- Mecca 40, 80, 81, 234, 286
- Media Dakwah* 300
- Medina Charter 13, 87, 138, 143–6, 158, 194, 201, 234–6, 255, 286
- Megawati Sukarnoputri 15, 20, 22, 24, 26–9, 32, 43, 83, 86, 177, 195–6, 292
- meliorists 34, 255
- Mendelsohn, Moses 324
- Mernissi, Fatima 67, 96, 104
- method 89–90, 92, 95, 203, 207, 262
- manhaj Ahlu al-Hadits/Salafi* 90
- manhaj fikr* 92, 104, 108–9, 167, 284, 303, 318
- manhaj sanasini* (of all directions) 75
- taqlid manhaj* (methodological imitation) 89
- methodological school (*Mazhab Manhaji*) 207
- methodology 92, 100, 102, 107, 116, 126, 134, 203, 205, 216, 268
- Meuleman, Johan 6–7

## INDEX

- middle class 6, 7, 19, 22, 36, 39, 62, 70, 178, 194, 293
- Middle East 3, 28, 61, 84, 91, 96, 106, 162, 181–2, 185, 186–7, 284, 294
- Middle East Technical University (METU) 53, 60
- Mietzner, Markus 33
- Mignolo, Walter 108
- Mihna* (inquisition) 94
- milla Ibrahim* 228, 235
- Ministry of Education and Culture 165
- Ministry of Home Affairs 197
- Ministry of Religious Affairs 38, 51, 59, 60, 76, 158, 165, 183, 190, 195, 216, 219, 224–5, 294, 314, 320
- Misrawi, Zuhairi 42, 70, 103, 137, 160, 228, 295
- Mizan (publishing house) 52, 61
- MMI (*Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia*) 28, 34, 138, 141, 145, 161, 195, 201, 202, 218
- Moderate Muslim Society (MMS) 295
- moderation and justice (*al-tawassut wa al-I'tidal*) 88
- moderatists 62–4
- Modern Indonesian Islam* (Madjid) 125
- modernism 2, 10, 37–9, 41–3, 47–9, 51, 57–8, 62, 66–8, 70–4, 80, 85–6, 88–9, 91, 96, 103–5, 107, 109–32, 152–6, 158, 160, 191, 195, 252, 255, 279–81, 284–5, 296, 302, 303, 305, 326
- modernity 90, 110–11, 113, 121, 124–6, 130–1, 138, 203, 274–5, 297
- Modul Islam & Multikulturalisme* 321
- Moluccas 25–7
- Moosa, Ebrahim 267, 271
- Morales, Frank Gaetano 254
- Morocco 65, 67, 95, 97, 99, 100, 157, 214, 215
- Movement for the Renewal of Islamic Thinking 37, 44
- MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*) 22, 24–6, 29, 291, 312
- MPU (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama*) 195, 197–9, 317
- Mrázek, Rudolf 296
- mu'amalat* (interactions) 1, 183, 218
- Mu'tazila 38, 57, 94, 123, 155, 198, 234
- Mu'tazili 57, 65, 91, 94, 207, 208, 242, 275
- Muhammadiyah 2–3, 18–19, 21, 24, 28–9, 33, 37–46, 48–51, 55–60, 62, 70–3, 76, 78–80, 85, 90–1, 95–6, 115, 117–18, 120–1, 127–34, 137–8, 142–3, 146, 148–50, 155, 165–8, 170, 172, 177, 182, 191–2, 194, 218–19, 224–5, 249, 252, 273–4, 285, 295, 297, 298, 299, 301, 306, 308, 309, 316, 324
- conservative turn 40, 59, 71
- cultural *dakwah* 51
- Himpunan Putusan Tarjih Muhammadiyah* 58
- Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* (IMM) 118, 294
- JIMM (*Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah*) 43, 71–3, 80, 128, 129–30, 133, 138, 222, 252, 285
- Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid* 71
- Marhaenis-Muhammadiyah* 43, 59, 70
- MTPPi (Council of Religious Rulings and the Furtherance of Islamic Thought) 71, 273
- Muhammadiyah Centre for the Study of Religion and Civilization 252
- Muhammadiyah Studies* 72, 295

## INDEX

- Munas (Muhammadiyah Nasionalis)* 43
- Munu (Muhammadiyah-NU)* 43, 98
- Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah (PPM)* 71
- Muhammadiyah University  
Malang 78  
Surakarta 51  
Yogyakarta 60, 72
- MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) 1, 10, 14, 19, 31, 34, 43, 63, 72, 104, 137–8, 151, 153, 158–63, 165–6, 175–6, 178, 190–2, 194–5, 200–2, 204, 206, 218–19, 221, 224, 228–9, 245, 247–8, 250–1, 254, 256, 262, 279, 289, 290, 311, 320, 324
- Mulkhan, Abdul Munir 59, 70, 71, 112, 128, 133–4, 148, 228, 243, 274, 285, 295, 297, 298, 299, 306
- Multicultural Piety* (Mulkhan) 274
- Munawar-Rachman, Budhy 42, 52, 56–7, 85, 121–8, 130, 133, 147, 148–50, 152, 159–61, 173–4, 176, 192, 226–9, 237, 244, 247, 250, 259, 297, 307, 310, 312
- Munhanif, Ali 52, 55, 73
- Murtopo, Ali 224, 292
- Muruwwa, Husayn 103
- Muslim Brotherhood 76, 77, 89, 249, 300
- Muslim Students Association (HMI) 37, 51, 54, 61, 75–9, 113, 118–20, 132, 201, 219, 240–1, 294, 323
- Muslim with Mosque* (Kuntowijoyo) 50
- Muslim World League 77
- muwatana* (citizenship) 157, 235, 261–2
- Muzadi, Hasyim 28, 29, 63, 309
- Muzani, Saiful 52
- an-Na'im, Abdullahi 152, 159, 202, 234–5, 258–9, 261, 266, 271, 293, 310, 311
- NAD Act 195–8
- Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) 2–3, 15, 18–20, 22, 24, 28–9, 32–3, 37–45, 47–9, 52, 55, 60, 62–70, 71, 73, 76, 79, 80, 86–96, 103–10, 112–13, 116–19, 121, 123, 129, 132, 134, 137–8, 143, 146, 153, 155, 157–8, 165–73, 176, 180, 185, 187–8, 191–2, 194, 203–4, 215, 218–19, 224, 225, 240, 249, 250, 252, 254, 262, 284, 304
- anak muda* NU 43, 64–70, 71, 73, 86, 104, 107, 316
- Aswaja* 63, 87–95, 98, 108–9, 157, 167, 180, 205, 207–8, 246, 262, 284, 304, 306
- conservative turn 40
- Fahmina Institute 45
- fiqh* 91–2, 167–8, 180, 185, 188
- intelektual muda* NU 43
- Kembali ke Khittah* 1926 39, 48, 63, 88, 105, 110, 167–8, 180, 205
- Lakpesdam 45, 47, 64, 65, 66, 70, 73, 215, 219, 252, 296
- LKiS (*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial*) 45, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 119, 215, 219
- LKPSM (*Lembaga Kajian Pesantren dan Sumber Daya Manusia*) 45, 66
- manhajul Fikr* NU 104, 109
- masyarakat sipil* 110
- Munu (Muhammadiyah-NU)* 43, 98
- New Ulama* 43, 62–4, 89, 134, 157, 204, 207, 284, 308
- P3M (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat*) 45, 56, 60, 64, 68, 70, 119, 129, 203–4, 296

## INDEX

- PBNU (*Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama*) 60, 63
- PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*) 22–4, 26, 32, 33
- PMII (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia*) 70, 118, 294
- nahdliyyin* 43, 60
- NasDem* (National Democrats) 29
- nasionalisme religius* 29
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein 237, 297
- Nasution, Harun 37–8, 52–4, 56–7, 107, 119, 122–4, 134, 202, 218, 274–5
- National Alliance for the Freedom of Religion and Belief (AKKBB) 175, 178, 222, 242, 311
- nationalism 29–30, 104, 159, 186–8, 214, 292
- Natsir, Mohammad 74–6, 78, 111, 120, 130, 182, 187–9, 206, 241, 275, 316
- Natural Law 188–9, 193, 252, 259, 281, 325
- neo-modernism 38, 47, 51, 68, 70, 85–6, 109–28, 154–5, 255, 280, 285, 296
- neo-traditionalism 51, 67, 119, 296
- Netherlands 4, 31, 120, 185, 187, 189, 223, 250, 291, 298, 315
- network approach 6
- Network of Young Muhammadiyah Intellectuals (JIMM) 43, 71–3, 80, 128, 129–30, 133, 138, 222, 252, 285
- New Indonesian National Union (PNI Baru) 291
- New Order regime 2–3, 6, 15–24, 25, 29–30, 32, 35, 37–40, 41, 46, 48, 52, 60, 74, 77–8, 83, 86, 105, 109, 110, 113, 120, 132–3, 141, 143, 146, 164, 166, 170, 174, 187–91, 193, 203, 223–5, 239, 241, 291, 293, 300
- New Paradigm for Islamic Education*, A (Husaini) 276
- New Ulama 43, 62–4, 89, 134, 157, 204, 207, 284, 308
- New York 27, 53, 227
- NGOs (non-governmental organisations) 28, 33, 44–6, 64, 66, 68, 77–8, 104, 119, 122, 175, 198, 216, 240, 251–2, 259, 276
- Nietzsche, Friedrich 107, 154, 236, 311
- Noer, Deliar 143, 145–6, 202
- Noer, Kautsar Azhar 159
- Non-Apologetic Renewal* 240, 242, 244, 259, 263
- Normalization of Campus Life (NKK) 76
- NU Studies* 90, 93, 94, 104, 108, 113, 116, 153, 169, 187, 304
- objectives of shari‘a 14, 157, 180, 202, 204, 209, 210–18, 220, 232–4, 244, 261, 269, 287, 324
- Old Order 15, 24, 109
- On Toleration* (Walzer) 225
- Orde Baru (see New Order)
- organic intellectuals 51, 104, 162, 190, 195, 208, 209, 290
- Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) 257
- Orientalism 97, 188–9, 304
- P3M (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat*) 45, 56, 60, 64, 68, 70, 119, 129, 203–4, 296
- Pakistan 38, 76, 77, 127, 132, 139, 254, 300
- Pakpahan, Muchtar 20
- Paloh, Surya 29, 32
- PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional*) 5, 22, 24, 32, 33–4, 133, 143
- Pancasila Day 34, 178
- Pancasila Doctrine 13, 17, 20, 22, 25, 31, 76, 85, 131, 133, 138, 140, 144, 146, 155, 158, 163, 164–78, 188, 193, 196, 200–2,

## INDEX

- 206, 215, 221, 224, 228, 238–9, 244–5, 260, 283, 285–6, 291, 312, 326
- Pannikar, Raimon 226–7, 237, 253
- Papua 25
- Paradigm of Islam* (Kuntowijoyo) 50
- paradigm shift 57, 93, 105, 120, 125, 265, 267, 268, 270
- Paramadina* 46
- Paramadina Foundation 44, 46, 52, 53, 54, 56, 69, 86, 226
- Paramadina University 6, 44, 54, 55, 56, 73, 79, 118–19, 139, 168, 216, 240, 301
- Paramadina Youth Forum 81
- Parsons, Talcott 147
- Partai Nasional Demokrat* 29
- PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang*) 21, 26, 29, 34, 78, 141, 143, 146, 197, 255, 291
- PCPP (*Persatuan Cendekiawan Pembangunan Pancasila*) 291
- PD (*Partai Demokrat*) 29–30, 73, 199, 294
- PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*) 20, 165
- PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan*) 22, 24, 26, 30, 32, 43, 133, 177, 200
- Pêcheux, Michel 70, 112
- Peletz, Michael 249
- pembaruan* (renewal thinking) 38, 40, 47, 53, 55–6, 58, 63, 70, 72, 75, 77, 85–6, 88, 96, 110, 114–15, 118–20, 123, 128, 131, 134, 139, 147, 191, 202, 209, 226, 240, 245–7, 259, 285
- People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) 22, 24–6, 29, 291, 312
- Penghijauan* (Greening) 40
- perda syariah* (*peraturan daerah syariah*) 13, 179, 181, 189, 191, 194–202, 216, 233, 250, 256, 287
- Perfect Country* (Latif) 171
- PERSIS (*Persatuan Islam*) 182, 191
- Perwiranegara, Alamsjah Ratoe 224
- pesantrens* 7, 38, 41, 45, 48–50, 55, 64–5, 68, 73, 81, 203–4, 215, 240, 244, 249, 298
- philosophy of education 56, 60, 264–73, 288
- Piaget, Jean 97
- pillarization (*aliranisasi*) 4, 142, 164
- PK (*Partai Keadilan*) 26
- PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa*) 22–4, 26, 32, 33
- PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*) 239
- PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*) 30, 34, 80, 143–6, 194, 197, 199, 255, 292
- Platzdasch, Bernhard 33–4, 144
- pluralism 1–2, 5–7, 10, 14, 31, 34, 41–2, 46, 57, 62, 69, 85, 87, 91–2, 112, 120, 124, 128, 137–8, 142, 144, 147, 153, 156, 159, 161–3, 175, 177–8, 181, 201–2, 204, 216, 219, 221–30, 233–41, 244–69, 273, 276–7, 279–80, 283–4, 287, 289, 299, 309, 311, 324
- Pluralist Islam* (Munawar-Rachman) 226, 307
- pluralists 14, 91, 128, 225–30, 234, 235, 237, 239, 241, 246–7, 250–1, 264, 287
- plurality 1, 10, 14, 23, 43, 52, 89, 91, 147, 152, 167, 194, 200, 202–3, 215, 219–21, 229, 238, 246, 248, 255–6, 283, 286
- PMII (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia*) 70, 118, 294
- PNI Baru (*Persatuan Nasional Indonesia Baru*) 291
- polarization 2, 4, 13, 27, 35, 40, 44, 76, 94, 103, 137, 158, 178, 199, 200, 218, 236, 277, 280

## INDEX

- Pondok Modern Gontor 59, 324
- Popper, Karl 57, 124, 267
- Poros Tengah* (Central Axis) 24, 27
- Poso 27, 31
- postcolonial theory 12, 51, 65, 67, 68, 96, 104, 107–8, 109, 284
- postmodernism 7, 12, 49, 65, 67, 68, 70, 96, 99, 104, 108, 109, 111, 112, 121–2, 130, 195, 284
- postmodernity 7, 49, 236, 286, 326
- postra (cf Islamic Post-Traditionalism) 65, 106
- postra community 90, 92, 106, 108–9, 160; *see also* Islamic post-traditionalism
- poststructuralism 9, 96, 99, 111
- PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*) 22, 24, 26, 29, 32–4, 39, 53, 141, 143, 165, 197, 293
- Prabowo Subianto 21, 23, 25, 29, 32–3, 78, 292–3
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer 20
- preacher combatants 75
- pribumisasi Islam* 119, 154, 156, 167, 187
- Pribumisasi Islam* (Wahid) 187
- Prisma* 46
- privatization 57, 151, 169, 170, 173, 286
- progressive Islam 62, 69, 70, 73, 134, 161, 189, 245, 262, 281
- Progressive Islam* 189
- proletariat 43, 59, 66, 69–70, 112, 238, 295
- propagate virtue and prevent evil (*amr bi al-ma'ruf wa nahyu 'an al-munkar*) 130, 140
- Prophetic Social Science 50, 59, 125, 130, 140, 269, 285, 308
- Protestantism 4, 57, 158, 169, 172, 226, 251, 253–4
- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* 172
- PSIK (*Pusat Studi Islam dan Kenegaraan*) 46, 55, 296
- public interest (*maslaha*) 157, 181, 184, 203–4, 207, 209, 212, 234
- Public Religions in the Modern World* (Casanova) 151
- PUI (*Partai Ummat Islam*) 143
- purification 49, 113, 116–17, 127, 183, 185
- Pustaka Manthiq 300
- al-Qaeda 28
- al-Qaradawi, Yusuf 111, 190, 235–6, 300, 322
- qat'i* 184, 205, 269
- Qatar 190, 211, 235
- qiyas* (reasoning by analogy) 94, 116, 209
- Qodir, Zuly 62, 71, 85, 128–34, 222, 297
- Qur'an 40, 47, 50, 55, 57–8, 60, 90, 94–5, 98–9, 103, 114–16, 124–7, 130–2, 134, 140, 150, 153, 165, 167, 183–4, 186, 190, 198, 203, 208, 213, 216, 218–19, 228, 230–1, 234, 242–4, 248, 251–2, 255, 261, 270, 272, 276–7, 297, 308, 318, 325
- Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism* (Esack) 92
- Qutb, Sayyid 89, 300
- radical monotheism 148
- Rahardjo, M. Dawam 8, 18, 38, 40, 44–7, 49–50, 55–6, 58–9, 77, 85, 118–19, 122, 125–8, 130, 132, 138, 140, 144, 146, 148, 150–1, 158, 160, 176, 200, 202, 228, 240, 244–5, 248, 250, 260, 282, 285, 305, 307, 323
- Rahmat, Imdadun 70
- Rahner, Karl 226, 237
- Raillon, François 21, 25, 28, 33, 175–7, 292
- Rais, Amien 3, 5, 21–2, 24–7, 29,

## INDEX

- 33, 38, 58, 85–6, 115, 130–1,  
143–4, 146, 150, 161
- Rakhmat, Jalaludin 85, 121, 122,  
252, 301, 305
- Ramakrishna 254
- al-Raniri 91
- Rasjidi, Mohammad 74, 190
- rational Islam 122–4, 218
- Rawls, John 172
- ar-Razi 245
- Reactualization Agenda 39, 44,  
52–3, 165, 218, 225
- Reaktualisasi Agenda* (Sjadzali) 187
- reason  
by analogy (*qiyas*) 94, 116, 209  
demonstrative (*burhani*) 98–9,  
108, 266, 270, 327  
discursive (*bayani*) 98–9, 116,  
266, 270, 327  
hermetic (*'irfani*) 98–9, 266, 270,  
327
- Reception Theory 185, 187
- Red-White Coalition 32
- Reform Institute 46, 296
- Reformasi* era 2, 6, 13, 16, 24–9,  
30, 36, 40, 41, 54, 64, 67, 79,  
83, 86, 141, 159, 160, 165, 166,  
171, 179, 182, 188, 191, 194,  
225, 285, 287
- Reinventing Indonesia* (Hidayat and  
Widjanarko) 308
- relativism 9, 205, 208, 227, 244,  
248, 254, 258–9, 273, 277, 324,  
326
- Religion of Justice* (Mas'udi) 205–  
7, 209, 218
- religious nationalism 29–30
- Religious Pluralism: Enemy of  
Religions* (Husaini) 250
- Religious Democratic State (RDS)  
142, 146–7, 166, 246, 285
- renewal thinking 38, 40, 47, 53,  
55–6, 58, 63, 70, 72, 75, 77,  
85–6, 88, 96, 110, 114–15, 118–  
20, 123, 128, 131, 134, 139,  
147, 191, 202, 209, 226, 240,  
245–7, 259, 285
- The Reorientation of Islamic  
Renewal* (Munawar-Rachman)  
226, 237, 259
- Representations of the Intellectual*  
(Said) 51
- Republika* 78
- Riau Archipelago 24
- Rida, Rashid 211, 237, 252
- ridda* (apostasy) 42, 234, 261, 322
- Ridwan, Nur Khalik 69–70, 110,  
112–13, 237–9, 322
- riots 21, 23
- Riyadi, Ahmad Ali 65–8, 70, 73,  
86, 303
- Riza ul Haq, Fajar 72
- Robbins, Bruce 8–9, 48, 51–2, 66,  
81, 109
- Roem, Mohamad 306
- Romahurmuziy, Muhammad 293
- Rorty, Richard 209, 318
- Rozenzweig, Franz 324
- Roy, Ram Mohan 254
- Rumadi 66–8, 70, 90–3, 95–6,  
100–2, 106–7, 109, 148, 167,  
192, 247, 256–7, 260, 294, 304
- Rumsfeld, Donald 11
- Sachedina, Abdulaziz 252
- Saefuddin, A.M. 85
- Said, Edward 8, 9, 51, 84, 108
- Sairin, Weinata 158
- Saksi* 300
- Salafism 35, 76, 79, 87, 90, 97,  
113, 117, 120, 155, 181, 193,  
208, 247–8, 281, 295
- Salafy* 300
- Saleh, Fauzan 64, 68, 110
- Salim, Hairus 70
- Sanskritization 224
- santri* 38, 42, 48, 133, 142, 295
- Sardar, Ziauddin 127, 139
- Sasono, Adi 119, 122, 126, 306

## INDEX

- Saudi Arabia 38–9, 63, 65, 77, 79, 190, 254, 257, 308
- Saussure, Ferdinand 97
- Sayembara Ahmad Wahib Award* (AWA) 240
- Scheler, Max 268
- scholar-thinkers (*chercheur-penseur*) 100, 103
- Schuon, Frithjof 237, 274
- The Secular City* (Cox) 149
- secular vocations 9, 66, 81, 267, 283, 288
- Secular Vocations* (Robbins) 9, 109
- secularism 1, 2, 5, 10, 13, 14, 31, 34, 41, 57, 127, 137–78, 204, 214, 219, 221, 246, 256, 279, 280, 283, 286, 289, 309, 310, 311
- secularity 10, 14, 57, 114, 117, 150, 161–3, 247, 286
- Searching for Islam* 52, 54
- secularization 13, 55–7, 104, 110, 114, 118, 133, 137, 140, 142, 147–74, 206, 218, 224, 239, 240, 246, 283, 286, 288, 310, 311
- Seebohm, Thomas 210
- Semarang 65, 182
- Sen, Kashub Chandra 254
- September 11 attacks 27, 105, 286
- al-Shafi'i 87, 94, 98, 157, 203, 208–9, 235, 237
- Shahrur, Muhammad 106, 244, 266, 271
- Shaltut, Mahmud 183, 186
- shari'a 2, 13–14, 61, 91, 145–7, 152, 157, 163, 179–83, 187–90, 193–202, 204–6, 210–18, 220, 232–4, 242, 244, 247, 261, 269–70, 287, 316, 317, 324
- objectives of shari'a 14, 157, 180, 202, 204, 209, 210–18, 220, 232–4, 244, 261, 269, 287, 324
- shari'atization 14, 179, 193–202, 216, 233, 242, 316
- Shari'ati, Ali 50, 61
- Sharia Faculty Noorhaidi Hasan 61
- al-Shatibi 99, 204, 209, 211–12, 234, 244
- Shi'ites 2, 91, 94, 156, 198, 222, 249, 252, 259, 295, 301, 302
- Shiddieqy, Hasbi Ash 182–7, 189–90, 205, 216, 315, 316, 317
- Shiddiq al-Jawi 79, 162
- Shihab, Quraish 52, 54, 161, 297
- al-Siba'i, Mustafa 300
- Sidel, John 5, 6–7
- Siddiq, Achmad 104
- Singapore 297
- al-Sinkili 91
- sipilis* 2
- SIRA (*Sentra Informasi Referendum Aceh*) 199, 317
- Siraj, Said Aqil 63–4, 89–90, 92–5, 134, 157, 204, 298, 318
- Sistani, Ali Husayni 252
- Siti Musdah Mulia 215, 219, 321
- Situbondo 225
- Sjadzali, Munawir 39, 52, 187, 218, 225, 294
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell 38, 151, 226, 227, 237, 274
- Snouck Hurgronje, Christiaan 185
- social ethics 107, 153–61, 168–70, 233, 286
- social *fiqh* 203
- social imaginary 69, 94, 204
- Solo 32, 51, 118, 120
- Soroush, Abdolkarim 139, 186, 310
- South Africa 92, 236, 267
- Spain 99, 169, 227, 231
- SRI (*Partai Serikat Rakyat Independen*) 314
- Steenbrink, Karel 80
- STI (*Sekolah Tinggi Wiraswasta*) 56
- State Islamic education system 224, 263, 273, 275
- State Islamic Institutes *see* IAIN
- Stepan, Alfred 171–3, 201, 286, 314



## INDEX

- STF Driyarkara (Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara) 53, 56, 57, 65, 68, 73, 314
- Strauss, Leo 189
- structuralism 96–7
- Studia Islamika* 46
- study of religion 11, 57, 81, 264–7, 273–4
- The Study of Religion: Normativity or Historicity?* (Abdullah) 265
- Suaedy, Ahmad 64, 123, 191, 215, 256–8, 261, 293, 300–1
- Suara Hidayatullah* 300
- sublimation 47, 115, 208, 228
- Sufism 59, 87, 88, 90–3, 97, 114, 117, 156, 180, 208–9, 249, 270, 282, 302
- Suharto 2, 3, 15–23, 25, 29–31, 35, 37, 40, 48, 60, 78, 96, 109, 141, 164, 166, 174–7, 191, 224–5, 286–7, 291, 292, 295, 312
- al-Suhrawardi 97, 245
- Sukarno 2, 15, 17, 20, 27, 37, 59, 109, 149, 164, 174, 175, 188, 241, 291, 292, 295
- Sulawesi 27, 29, 68, 191, 314
- Sumargono, Ahmad 78
- Sumatra 20, 59, 75, 91, 188, 191, 194, 245, 314, 315
- Sumitro Djojohadikusumo 292
- Sunnatullah* 189–90, 213, 248, 252
- Surabaya 60, 65, 66, 182, 296
- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) 16, 26, 28, 29–35, 73, 176, 192, 200, 222, 280, 294
- Sutrisno, Try 177
- Syamsuddin, Sirajuddin 21, 71, 138, 177, 218–19, 324
- symbolic capital 69
- al-Tabataba'i 237
- tabligh* 74, 77, 249, 299
- tafsir* 98, 126, 215, 277
- Tafore, Debendranath 254
- Taha, Mahmud Muhammad 54, 234
- tajdid* 117
- takhayul bid'a churafat* (TBC) 2, 43, 127, 134
- talfiq* 183
- Tanjung, Akbar 22, 24, 26–7, 29–30, 113, 120, 177, 292, 294
- taqlid* 67, 89
- taqwa* 213, 230, 275
- tarbiyah* 76–7, 80, 188
- tarjih* 205
- tasamuh* 88
- Tashwirul Afkar* 47, 65–6, 69, 70, 90, 103, 108, 111, 154, 252, 298, 302, 303
- al-tawassut wa al-I'tidal* (moderation and justice) 88
- tawazun* 88
- Tawhid* 124, 140, 148, 167, 213, 242, 246, 251, 274, 282, 327
- al-Tawhidi 103
- TBC (*takhayul bid'a churafat*) 2, 43, 127, 134
- Tempo* 28, 31, 219, 293
- Tempo Media Group 176
- Teologi Abu-Abu* 253–4
- teologi kekhalfahan* (caliphal theology) 56–7
- Ter Haar, Barend 185
- terrorism 27–8, 63, 105, 286
- theocentrism 91–3, 140, 149, 206, 217, 232–3, 235, 272, 307
- think tanks 21, 28, 44–6, 59, 66, 68, 77, 79, 119, 176, 224, 259
- Third Space 52, 107
- Third Way 3–4, 77, 119, 145
- Thoha, Anis Malik 254
- Tibi, Bassam 96, 159, 311
- Timor 24–5
- Tizini, Tayyib 103
- Tolleng, Rahman 31, 175–6, 314
- Torres, Camilla 307
- Towards an Islamic Reformation* (an-Na'im) 310

# INDEX

- traditionalism 42, 98, 114, 129, 207, 280, 296
- Transformative Islam 59, 67, 85, 122–3, 125–31, 140, 156, 168, 170, 243, 270–1, 285, 307, 312
- Transformative Islamic Education* (Arif) 270
- travelling theory 8, 84, 95–6, 284
- The Treason of the Intellectuals* (Benda) 8, 290
- Tsunami disaster (2004) 30, 195–7, 199
- turath* (heritage) 40, 47, 84, 95, 97, 99, 124, 303
- turathiiyyun* (heritage thinkers) 12, 65, 68, 96, 104, 109–10, 112, 124, 162, 232, 235, 266, 282, 284
- Turkey 39, 53, 59, 150, 214, 215, 314
- UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) 21, 189, 256–9, 262, 325
- UGM (Universitas Gadjah Mada) 50, 53, 59–60, 64, 70, 72, 176, 240, 312, 327
- UIDHR (Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights) 257–8
- UIN (Universitas Islam Negeri) 53, 58, 59, 61–2, 70, 72, 95, 133, 139, 150, 159, 168, 183, 210, 222, 228, 264–5, 271, 273–5, 294, 308
- Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta 62, 58, 59, 61–2, 70, 95, 150, 168, 183, 210, 264–5, 271, 273, 274, 288, 318
- Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta 53, 72, 95, 133, 139, 150, 222, 274, 276, 308, 327
- ulama* 39, 43, 48, 49, 63, 66, 73, 89, 105, 134, 146, 157, 182, 186, 190–1, 194–5, 204, 207, 230, 242–3, 245, 266, 275, 284, 308
- Ulumul Qur'an* 47
- Umayyad Caliphate 94
- Umm al-Qura University 318
- umma wasat* 88
- Ummat* 21, 69
- Union of Independent People Party (*Partai Serikat Rakyat Independen*) 314
- Union of Intellectuals for the Development of Pancasila (PCPP) 291
- United States 27–8, 63, 78, 105
- Unity in Diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) 174, 249
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 21, 189, 256–9, 262, 325
- universalism 9, 11, 85, 173, 233, 254, 257–8
- Universitas Indonesia 51, 53, 64, 78, 176, 185, 300, 318
- Universitas Padjajaran (UNPAD) 301
- University of Amsterdam 316
- University of Chicago 38, 47, 115, 121, 155
- University of Illinois 51
- University of Jember 202
- Upheaval in Islamic Thinking* 241
- Urbaningrum, Anas 113, 294
- Ushuluddin* (Foundations of Religion) 265
- usroh* 76
- usul al-fiqh* 14, 95, 180, 202, 210–16, 220, 234
- al-Uthaymin, Muhammad Salih 190
- utopia 34, 50, 123, 142, 145, 154, 161, 209, 233, 255, 281, 309
- verzuijing* (pillarization) 4, 142, 164
- Vivekananda 254
- The Virus of Liberalism in Islamic Higher Education* 273

## INDEX

- van Vollenhoven, Cornelis 185, 187
- Wadjdi, Farid 79, 162–3, 192, 247
- Wadud, Amina 277
- Wahab, M. Wahib 275
- Wahhabism 116–17, 242, 281
- Wahib, Ahmad 57–8, 118–19, 240–4, 250, 263–4, 283, 288, 316, 323
- Wahid Institute 46, 64, 191, 206, 215, 219, 248, 256–9, 261–2, 296, 298, 311
- Wahid, Abdurrahman 3, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22–6, 29, 34, 38, 46–9, 60, 63, 67–8, 70–1, 73, 81, 83, 85–6, 88–9, 91, 93, 104–7, 111, 118–22, 128–30, 134, 137, 143, 153–8, 166–8, 170, 172, 176–7, 185, 187, 191–2, 195, 202, 204, 225, 240, 247, 282, 285, 289, 290, 298, 301, 302, 305, 313
- Wahid, Hidayat Nur 30, 143–4, 194, 255
- Wahid, Marzuki 66, 70, 215–16, 219, 316
- Wahid, Salahuddin 176
- Wahyudi, Yudian 61, 86, 95–6, 183–4, 187, 190, 210–13, 217, 231, 233, 298, 319, 324
- Walzer, Michael 225
- Wanandi, Jusuf and Sofyan 320
- war of ideas 11
- War on Terror 27–8, 63, 105
- Al-Wasathiyah* 47, 252
- Watson, Bill 299
- Weber, Max 124–6, 150, 172
- Widodo, Joko (Jokowi) 32–3, 54, 293
- Wihdah Press 300
- Wiranto 23–6, 29, 32, 177, 292, 314
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig 57, 122, 125
- The World, the Text and the Critic* (Said) 8
- World Islamic Congress 76
- World Trade Centre, New York 27
- Yafie, Ali 63–4, 69, 146, 183, 192, 203–4, 298
- Yanggo, Huzaemah Tahido 218
- YKPK (*Yayasan Kerukunan Persaudaraan Kebangsaan*) 291
- Yogyakarta 26, 49, 57, 58, 59, 61, 66, 70, 118, 119, 120, 240, 244, 295
- IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta 37, 42, 46, 59–60, 64, 65, 182, 184, 264–5, 294
- Jogja School 42, 58–62, 75
- Limited Group 58, 60, 122, 244, 250, 283, 316
- LKiS (Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial) 45, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 119, 215, 219
- LKPSM (Lembaga Kajian Pesantren dan Sumber Daya Manusia) 45, 66
- Muhammadiyah University 60, 72
- UGM (Universitas Gadjah Mada) 50, 53, 59–60, 64, 70, 72, 176, 240, 312, 327
- UIN Sunan Kalijaga 62, 58, 59, 61–2, 70, 95, 150, 168, 183, 210, 264–5, 271, 273, 274, 288, 318
- Yusanto, Ismail 79, 162–3, 201
- Yusril Ihza Mahendra 21, 29, 143, 145, 202
- Zada, Khamami 70, 252, 303
- zakat* 187, 205–7, 209
- zandaqa* (heresy) 261
- zanni* 184, 205, 269





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**LEUVEN**

The findings of the present study show that what is fundamentally at stake in the intellectual contestations that have been discussed is how Indonesian Muslims value state governance, civil society, and individual liberty and freedom. Whichever way they choose to go, it will be yet another instance of how religion—as a matter of people’s ultimate existential concerns—remains intricately entwined with social transformation. This in turn affects how Indonesian Muslims respond to the secularization process and accompanying calls for religious tolerance, which will ultimately determine what kind of country Indonesia will be, how the state treats its citizens and how they will behave towards each other.